

Polygynous Blessings
Musings of a Muslim Wife

::: REVISED EDITION :::

By: MizAzeez

Polygynous Blessings

Musings of a Muslim Wife

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Qur'aanic references taken from
Translation of the Meanings of The Noble Qur'aan in the English Language by
Dr. Muhammad Taqi-ud-Din Al-Hilali and Dr. Muhammad Muhsin Khan,
published by the King Fahd Complex For The Printing of the Holy *Qur'aan*,
Saudi Arabia.

Explanations of verses of the *Qur'aan* are taken from *Tafseer Ibn Katheer*.

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"And among His signs is this, that He has created for you wives from among yourselves, that you may find repose in them, and He has put between you affection and mercy. Verily, in that are indeed signs for a people who reflect (30:21)"

"...then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three or four (4:3)"

"...they (wives) are garments for you and you are the same for them (2:187)."

Dedication

“Say: Verily, my Salaat (prayer), my sacrifice, my living, and my dying are for Allaah, the Lord of the ‘Aalameen (mankind, jinn, and all that exists) (6:162).”

Preface to the Revised Edition

In the Name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Indeed, all praise is due to *Allaah*. We praise Him, and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in *Allaah* from the evils of our own selves and from our wrong doings. Whomsoever *Allaah* guides no one can misguide, and whomsoever He misguides no one can guide.

I testify that there is no true deity worthy of being worshipped except *Allaah*, alone, without any partners. And I testify that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger – may *Allaah* send prayers upon him, his family, and his companions.

As for the following:

After the publication of the first edition of *Polygynous Blessings: Musings of a Muslim Wife*, there were a number of corrections brought to my attention that I felt the need to address and incorporate into a revised edition of the book, which you, the reader, now hold in your hands. In addition to the correction of common grammatical mistakes, I have also removed any information that, upon review, could be taken as a violation of the character and honor of certain individuals in my life, from amongst them my co-wife, husband, family and community members. As the Prophet Muhammad, *Sallallaahu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam*, stated:

“All things of a Muslim are inviolable for his brother in faith: his blood, his wealth and his honor.”¹

Let it be known that my intent in writing this book has never been to highlight the faults and shortcomings of any individual; rather, my intent has been to clarify some of the common misconceptions of polygyny in *Islaam*, as well as provide a personal outlook on both the trials and the blessings of being a wife in a polygynous marriage, in order that my dear sisters in *Islaam* might find their hearts softened to the prospect of sharing a husband. If I have in any way offended anyone with my work, then I apologize, seek forgiveness for this and ask that *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta’aalaa* will pardon me for my shortcomings and forgive me my sins. As *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta’aalaa* states:

¹ *Saheeh Muslim*, The Book of Righteousness, Manners, and Enjoining the Ties of Kinship, *Hadeeth* No. 6219.

“Verily, Allaah forgives not that partners should be set up with Him in worship, but He forgives other than that to whom He pleases.”²

And indeed with *Allaah* lies all success.

Aneesa Azeez
10 Safar 1429/17 February 2008

² *Surat An-Nisaa* (4):48.

Foreword

In the Name of Allaah, the Most Merciful, the Bestower of Mercy

Indeed, all praise is due to *Allaah*. We praise Him, and seek His help and forgiveness. We seek refuge in *Allaah* from the evils of our own selves and from our wrong doings. Whomsoever *Allaah* guides no one can misguide, and whomsoever He misguides no one can guide.

I testify that there is no true deity worthy of being worshipped except *Allaah*, alone, without any partners. And I testify that Muhammad is His slave and Messenger – may *Allaah* send prayers upon him, his family, and his companions.

"O you who believe! Fear Allaah (by doing all that He has ordered and by abstaining from all that He has forbidden) as He should be feared (obey Him, be thankful to Him, and remember Him always) and die not except in a state of Islaam (as Muslims) with complete submission to Allaah."
(*Aal- 'Imraan* 3:102)

As for the following:

Indeed in these contemporary times a comprehensive understanding of *Islaam's* perspective on polygyny is needed. In the author's humble attempt to embark upon this monumental task, this book represents a blend of scholarship (*Qur'aan* and *Sunnah*) and personal experience.

I ask of *Allaah* that through this work people are given insight into one of the most beneficial and yet highly misunderstood components of *Islaam*, a part of the *Sunnah* of the Prophet Muhammad, may the peace and blessings of *Allaah* be upon him, that when practiced correctly, provides a key remedy to a number of societal ills. And may *Allaah* guide the affairs of those involved in the composition of this book.

O Allaah you are free of any imperfection; Praise be to you. I testify that there is no true ilah (god) except you; I ask your pardon and turn to you in repentance. Ameen.

*Loving Husband a.k.a. Mr. Azeez
12 Dhul Hijjah, 1427/1 January 2007*

Introduction: Establishing a Foundation

"It is not for the Believer, man or woman, when Allaah and His Messenger have decreed a matter that they should have any option in their decision. And whoever disobeys Allaah and His Messenger, he has indeed strayed in a plain error."

~Surat Al-Ahzaab (33):36

Since polygyny has become a reality in my life, I have come across numerous comments, both verbal and written, seeking to define the limitations and conditions of polygyny in *Islaam*. *Alhamdulillah*³, much of the information that I have come across has been correct. However, in the midst of such truth there has also been a great deal of falsehood. I have decided that because the focus of my memoir is polygyny and *Insha'Allaah*⁴ I seek to shed a truthful light on this blessed part of *Islaam*, I want to tackle some of the misconceptions about what polygyny in *Islaam* is and isn't. Everything that follows will be accompanied by proof from the *Qur'aan* and *Sunnah Bi'idhnillaah*⁵.

First: The *Aayah* in the *Qur'aan* That Establishes Polygyny as a Part of *Islaam*

"And if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly with the orphan girls, then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three, or four."
(*An-Nisaa'* 4:3)

Tafseer Ibn Katheer: The Permission to Marry Four Women

Allaah's statement "two or three, or four" means, marry as many women as you like, other than the orphan girls, two, three or four. We should mention that *Allaah's* statement in another *Aayah*,

³ All praise is due to *Allaah*.

⁴ If *Allaah* wills.

⁵ By the permission of *Allaah*.

"Who made the angels messengers with wings, - two or three or four (35:1),"

does not mean that other angels do not have more than four wings, as there are proofs that some angels do have more wings. Yet, men are prohibited from marrying more than four wives, as the *Aayah* decrees, since the *Aayah* specifies what men are allowed of wives, as Ibn 'Abbaas and the majority of scholars stated. If it were allowed for them to have more than four wives, the *Aayah* would have mentioned it.

Imaam Ahmad recorded that Saalim said that his father said that Gheelan bin Salamah Ath-Thaqafi had ten wives when he became *Muslim*, and the Prophet, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*⁶, said to him, "Choose any four of them (and divorce the rest)." During the reign of 'Umar, Gheelan divorced his remaining wives and divided his money between his children. When 'Umar heard news of this, he said to Gheelan, "I think that the devil has conveyed to your heart the news of your imminent death, from what the devil hears during his eavesdropping. It may as well be that you will not remain alive but for a little longer. By *Allaah*! You will take back your wives and your money, or I will take possession of this all and will order that your grave be stoned as is the case with the grave of Abu Righak (from Thamuud, who was saved from their fate because he was in the Sacred Area. But, when he left it, he was tormented like they were)." Ash-Shafi'ee, At-Tirmidhi, Ibn Maajah, Ad-Daaraqutni and Al-Bayhaqi collected this *Hadeeth* up to the Prophet's statement, "Choose any four of them." Only Ahmad collected the full version of this *Hadeeth*.

Therefore, had it been allowed for men to marry more than four women at the same time, the Prophet, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, would have allowed Gheelan to keep more than four of his wives since they all embraced *Islaam* with him. When the Prophet, *Salallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, commanded him to keep just four of them and divorce the rest, this indicated that men are not allowed to keep more than four wives at a time under any circumstances. If this is the case concerning those who already had more than four wives upon embracing *Islaam*, then this ruling applies even more so to marrying more than four.

⁶ May *Allaah* send peace and prayers upon him.

My Note

It is clear from the above *Tafseer* of the classical *Mufasssir* Ibn Katheer that the proof for polygyny being a part of *Islaam* is established in *Aayah* three of *Surat an-Nisaa'*. In addition, this *Aayah* establishes the limit of four wives, a limitation that was not in place prior to *Islaam* as is evident from the *Hadeeth* of Gheelan bin Salamah Ath-Thaqafi who had ten wives prior to *Islaam* and, upon the revelation of this *Aayah*, was instructed by the Prophet, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, to divorce six of his wives and retain four.

The *Hadeeth* of Gheelan bin Salamah is also proof against those who claim that the Prophet, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, favored monogamy or that *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa'*⁷ declared monogamy to be better than polygyny. If this was so, then surely the Prophet, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, would have advised Gheelan to divorce nine of his wives and retain only one and surely when 'Umar, *Radee Allaahu 'Anhu'*⁸, heard that Gheelan had divorced the remaining four of his wives, he ('Umar), *Radee Allaahu 'Anhu*, would not have advised Gheelan to remarry all four.

Second: The Two *Aayaat* Dealing with the Issue of Justice Between Multiple Wives

*"But if you fear that you will not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or what your right hands possess."
(An-Nisaa' 4:3)*

Tafseer Ibn Katheer: Marrying Only One Wife When One Fears He Might Not Do Justice to His Wives

Regarding *Allaah's* statement,

"But if you fear that you will not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or what your right hands possess."

The *Aayah* commands, if you fear that you will not be able to do justice between your wives by marrying more than one, then marry only one wife, or satisfy yourself with only female captives, for it is not obligatory to treat them equally, rather it is recommended. So if

⁷ Glorified and high is He above all imperfections.

⁸ May *Allaah* be pleased with him.

one does so, that is good, and if not, there is no harm on him. In another *Aayah*, *Allaah* said,

"You will never be able to do perfect justice between wives even if it is your ardent desire (4:129)."

Allaah said,

"That is nearer to prevent you from *Ta'uuluu*,"

meaning, from doing injustice. Ibn Abee Haatim, Ibn Marduwyah and Abu Haatim Ibn Hibbaan, in his *Saheeh*, recorded that 'Aa'ishah said that, the Prophet, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, said that the *Aayah*, "That is nearer to prevent you from *Ta'uuluu*," means, from doing injustice. However, Ibn Abee Haatim said that his father said that this *Hadeeth* to the Prophet, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, is a mistake, for it should be attributed to 'Aa'ishah not the Prophet, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*.

My Note

Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa reveals things in their order of preference and importance. For example, regarding *Zakaah*, *Allaah* states,

"*As-Sadaqaat* (i.e. *Zakaah*) are only for the *Fuqaraa'*, and *Al-Masaakeen*, and those employed to collect the funds; and to attract the hearts of those who have been inclined (towards *Islaam*); and to free the captives; and for those in debt; and for *Allaah's* cause, and for *Ibn As-Sabeel*; a duty imposed by *Allaah*. And *Allaah* is All-Knower, All-Wise (9:60)."

In *Tafseer Ibn Katheer*, it is stated, "*Allaah* mentioned the expenditures of *Zakaah* in this *Aayah*, starting with the *Fuqaraa'* (the poor) because they have more need than the other categories, since their need is pressing and precarious." Also, many of the classical scholars have commented on this *Aayah* that the categories of people worthy of *Zakaah* are mentioned according to importance, with the most important being the first mentioned (i.e. the *Fuqaraa'*) and descending in importance and priority accordingly.

That being said, the same is true with regards to the *Aayah* about polygyny. Again, just to refresh the reader's memory, *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* states in *Surat an-Nisaa'* (4):3,

"**But** if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), **then** only one ..."

I have bolded the "but" and the "then" to make a grammatical point. But first, clearly *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* mentions polygyny first in the *Aayah* before mentioning monogamy. Secondly, *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* mentions monogamy as being conditional upon one fearing he will not be able to do justice. He states that if one fears not being able to deal justly with more than one wife, then he should marry only one. The word "then" implies that what comes after it is secondary upon the conditions that are mentioned before it. This point is very important, for often in discussions about polygyny, people start off with making the point that polygyny is conditional upon the man being able to be just, insinuating that monogamy is of priority and polygyny is secondary. However, if one were to truly look at the *Aayah* they would see that, in fact, *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* mentions polygyny first and then specifies that monogamy is conditional upon one fearing he cannot be just.⁹

⁹ Regarding polygyny being the foundation of marriage in *Islam*:

Shaykh 'Abdul-Azeez Bin 'Abdullaah Bin Baaz, *Raheemhullaah*, when asked, "Is the foundation of marriage polygyny or is it having one wife?" answered:

The foundation in the *Sharee'ah* is polygyny for he who has the capability to do so, and will not oppress them. This is due to the many benefits of polygyny, protecting ones private parts, protection for the one who marries women and is good to them. The increase of offspring by which the *Ummah* is increased thereby an increase of those who worship *Allaah* alone. The evidence which shows this is the saying of *Allaah Ta'aalaa*:

"Then marry (other) women of your choice, two or three, or four but if you fear that you shall not be able to deal justly (with them), then only one or (the captives and the slaves) that your right hands possess. That is nearer to prevent you from doing injustice." (*Soorah An-Nisaa* 4:3)

Also, because the Messenger - *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam* – married more than one wife and *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* said: "Verily in the Messenger of *Allaah* you have a beautiful example." (*Soorah Al-Ahzaab* 33:21)

The Messenger- *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam* – mentioned when some of the companions said: As for me then I will not eat meat. Another one said: As for me then I will pray and I will not sleep. Another one said: As for me then I will fast and not open my fast. Another one said: As for me then I will not marry women.

So when this news reached the Prophet - *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam* – he addressed the people and praised and glorified *Allaah* then he said: "Indeed such and such news has reached me. However I fast and open my fast, pray and sleep. I eat meat and marry women. So whoever turns away from my *Sunnah* is not from me."

Regarding the *Aayah* "You will never be able to do perfect justice between wives even if it is your ardent desire (4:129)," in *Tafseer ibn Katheer* it states,

"(it) means, O people! You will never be able to be perfectly just between wives in every respect. Even when one divides the nights justly between wives, there will still be various degrees concerning love, desire and sexual intimacy, as Ibn 'Abbaas, 'Ubaydah As-Salmaani, Mujaahid, Al-Hasan Al-Basree and Ad-Dahhaak bin Muzaahim stated.

"Imaam Ahmad and the collectors of the *Sunan* recorded that 'Aa'ishah said: The Messenger of *Allaah*, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, used to treat his wives equally and proclaim,

'O Allaah! This is my division in what I own, so do not blame me for what You own and I do not own,'

referring to his heart. This was the wording that Abu Dawuud collected, and its chain of narrators is *Saheeh*."

My Note

So, from the above it becomes clear that when *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* enjoins the believing men to treat multiple wives equally, what is meant by equality is equality in the division of nights, maintenance and those things which one has control over, but that *Insha'Allaah* he is excused from those things he does not have control over such as love, desire, and sexual intimacy.

Also, this clears up any misconceptions that there are contradictions in the *Qur'aan* being that in *Surat an-Nisaa'* *Allaah* enjoins the believing men to be just to multiple wives and then later states that they will never be able to do perfect justice. The first *Aayah* is referring to those things that one has control over and the second is referring to those things which one does not have control over.

This is a great statement from the Prophet - *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam* – which includes having one wife and polygyny. And *Allaah* is The One who gives the capability. [Source: *Al-Balaag Magazine* no.1015, 19 Rabi al-Awal 1410 A.H. (Translated by Abbas Abu Yahya)]

Also, take note that while each wife is entitled to equality when it comes to maintenance and nights, a woman can also choose to forego these rights and there will be no sin on the man. One example we have is that of Sawdah bint Zam'a, *Radee Allaahu 'Anha*¹⁰, who gave up her night¹¹ to 'Aa'ishah, *Radee Allaahu 'Anha*.

Third: Regarding the notion that polygyny is only permissible during times of war, marriage to widows or if one's wife cannot have children, there is no authentic proof from the *Qur'aan* or the *Sunnah* that supports this claim. Quite the contrary, we find that in the example of *Rasulullaah, Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, who was the best of examples, that amongst his wives were those who were widows and those who were not, those who were married as a consequence of war and those who were not. There is no indication that the Prophet married again due to his current wives not being able to have children. Nowhere in the *Qur'aan* does *Allaah* set the condition that a believing man can only have more than one wife in instances of war, marrying of widows, or a current wife's infertility. So, while the above-mentioned scenarios are conditions in which polygyny is beneficial and might be practiced, by no means are they the ONLY conditions under which polygyny can take place.

In closing, *Insha'Allaah* I pray that I have clarified some of the most common misunderstandings regarding polygyny in *Islaam*. And I pray *Insha'Allaah* that *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* accepts this from me as an extension of my worship of and submission to Him and forgives me my shortcomings. All that I have said that is correct and true is from *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. The mistakes are only my own.

¹⁰ May *Allaah* be pleased with her.

¹¹ *Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree*, Volume 7, Book of Marriage, *Hadeeth* No. 4869.

Part One: Seeking Solace

“O you who believe! Seek help in patience and As-Salaat (the prayer). Truly! Allaah is with As-Saabiruun (the patient ones).”

~Surat Al-Baqarah (2):153

Letter to My Husband

Monday, April 3, 2006

Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem¹². Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Aalameen¹³.

Assalaamu 'Alaykum wa Rahmatullaahi wa Barakaatuh¹⁴. You know, surprisingly I have been doing extremely well in verbally communicating my thoughts and feelings to you Alhamdulillah. Usually it would be a trial for me, but by the Will of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa my words have been flowing very fluidly. In the few conversations we have had I have pretty much said all that I can muster up to express at this point, however, I figured I would try writing down how I'm feeling as well and maybe something more would come out. I am shocked, hurt, angry, confused all in one. Didn't see this coming. Or should I say, didn't see it coming so soon. Haven't even been able to fully enjoy my time with you as your only wife and now have to deal with the possibility of sharing you with another. It's funny because most of the sisters I know that are in this situation were with their husbands for a few years and had a couple of children before the co-wife prospect was brought into the mix. Their husbands, similar to some of your previous feelings, wanted to enjoy them first, give them attention and love exclusively, bless them with bearing children and their children having a full-time daddy and support, before marrying again. You, on the other hand, have chosen to take the leap before fully leaping with me, knowing how I struggle not seeing you for weeks on end, settling for a couple of days on the weekend, when your time is sometimes, not always,

¹² In the Name of Allaah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

¹³ All the praises and thanks be to Allaah, the Lord of the 'Aalameen (mankind, jinn, and all that exists).

¹⁴ May the peace of Allaah be upon you all, and His mercy, and His blessings.

dedicated exclusively towards me. Truth is, I already am not enjoying you fully, due to circumstance and also due to you being the man that you are, wanting to be involved in anything and everything, all for the sake of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa Insha'Allaah. And yet and still, sometimes I wish that you would indulge in me with the same vigor. Sometimes I feel that I am not a priority. Loved? Yes. Wanted? Sometimes. Needed? Hmm... I wonder how you plan on dividing your time equally between us. It seems easy on the surface, but then again, I already feel like time spent with me is inadequate. And now with someone else in the mix...

But anyway...the truth is that this is more about you and I than you and her. Do I love you? Yes I do. Despite the pain, despite the disappointment, despite the resentment, despite the anger, there is one thing that you have given me that I could never deny and that I am eternally grateful to you for and that is a correct and better understanding of Islaam. With that I have been blessed. And so I stay. It is possibly the only thing, my Deen, that is making me stay, that is keeping me from asking for a divorce. Possibly my love for you is too, but quite honestly that love seems to be dwindling by the minute. When you confirmed that you were thinking of doing this, it was like most of my love was knocked out of me onto the floor. My love, in an attempt to reclaim its place in my heart, suddenly dissipated into a few particles of dust.

I never thought that I would end up being the wife that stays married to a man that she does not love or have affection for. Never wanted to be that wife. And as of right now, I am not that wife because there is still an inkling of love that I have for my husband. There is still an inkling of love that I have for you. But its life span is as unknown as a human's life span in this Dunyaa. Could die any minute. And when it does, I will become that wife. Insha'Allaah, may Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa have mercy on my soul and grant me the strength to survive the trial. Ameen.



Tuesday, June 06, 2006

New Beginnings

I look at dealing with polygyny as I do with any other act of 'Ibaadah¹⁵. As *Muslims* we are constantly supposed to be striving to perfect our 'Ibaadah of *Allaah*, whether through perfecting our *Salaah*¹⁶, perfecting our 'Ilm¹⁷ of this *Deen*¹⁸, perfecting our abilities in being a *Da'ee*¹⁹, perfecting being a righteous and pious wife and mother, etc. We should never get to a point with anything in this *Deen* where we say, "I have done enough. I am perfect in this." *Na'uudhubillaah*²⁰ from falling into such transgression. We can never "do enough" for *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. Hence, every act of 'Ibaadah we do is a process of growth, of striving to excel and do better. This includes our dealing with polygyny, which is a sub category of being a righteous and pious wife, which is a sub category of being a righteous and pious servant of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. And as we know, this life is filled with trials and tests, some we excel at and some we falter in, but through all we should ultimately proceed from striving to be better *Muslims Insha'Allaah*. All of that being said...

When I first found out about my husband taking another wife I was...devastated. Not about him taking another wife. *Wallaahi*²¹, I had dealt with any hang-ups I may have had about polygyny way before I even met my husband *Alhamdulillah*. I actually, upon getting to know my husband prior to marriage, anticipated that he would take another wife eventually in our marriage because of his nature in always wanting to help someone and because I felt that *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* had blessed him with such humbleness and compassion that I just knew he could be of benefit to so many people, including another wife. We had talked about polygyny numerous times before and after we got married and he always assured me that it was not a path he was considering, that I was all he needed, that if it did happen most likely it would be from me suggesting he help some sister in need. My devastation was therefore not a consequence of my husband's polygynous endeavors in general, but was brought about by some unresolved issues that existed between he and I. Later on, as I began to process my emotions, I came to realize that much of my devastation was merely my

¹⁵ Worship (of *Allaah* alone).

¹⁶ Prayer.

¹⁷ Knowledge.

¹⁸ Way of life.

¹⁹ Caller to *Allaah*.

²⁰ We seek refuge in *Allaah*.

²¹ By *Allaah*.

insecurities speaking and my feeling like my husband was displeased with me and so he was marrying another. But when you're in the beginning of things, you're not trying to do any self-assessment. You're too busy assessing everyone else.

With all of that being said, my getting through it all was totally due to *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. I take no credit, none whatsoever. I was devastated for about a week and then came the clarity. Then came the wisdom. Then came my really looking at the situation for what it could be. Because really the way you deal with your husband taking another wife is all about perspective; it's about how you're looking at it. If you're looking at it as taking something away from you (i.e. loss of your husband's love, time, support), as your husband being displeased with you, as you being inadequate, you, you, you, then you're bound to be in a state of devastation, denial, and rejection for awhile. And may *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* remove these feelings from the hearts of any of my sisters for whom this is a current or future reality. However, I began to look at it differently. For starters, polygyny can be yet another means of you obtaining the *Barakah* of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. Even just you struggling with your emotions, with your jealousy and striving to overcome the emotional trials that you place upon yourself (for truly that's what it is, at least in the beginning) and fully accept the situation *Insha'Allaah* you will receive reward from *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. Really, ultimately, my smooth transition was totally about me trusting in the Will of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* and viewing polygyny as a means for me to obtain *Barakah*. If my husband was going to do this, then I was going to use it as another means to my seeking the pleasure of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. I was going to be helpful to him, cooperative, and I was even going to reach out to the sister because in the end, all of our actions should be for the sake of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. When we do things we should be thinking, "Now, is this going to draw the pleasure of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* or His anger?" and "Is this going to be something that will get me to *Jannah*²² *Insha'Allaah*?" Again, it's all about perspective. If you're looking at polygyny purely from a *Dunyawi*, "my husband is MINE" perspective, you're truly missing the point of this life, which is to worship *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* in a manner that will gain you that ultimate reward, *Jannat Al-Firdaus*²³. This is connected to another thing and that is that your husband is not yours; he is merely a loan to you from *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* in this life and *Insha'Allaah* in the next and you are not the true possessor of anything.

²² Paradise.

²³ The highest station in Paradise.

Before I end I do also want to say that in addition to my own self-reflective coping strategies, I was blessed to have wonderful *Muslimaat* in my life that gave me the most beautiful *Naseehah*²⁴ and support throughout the entire process and constantly reminded me of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. I made sure that whoever I confided in would be honest, sincere, and would stick to *Qur'aan* and *Sunnah*, not baseless opinion, assumption, and conjecture. I didn't call someone that I knew would fuel the fire that *Shaytaan*²⁵ was trying to light. I also *Alhamdulillah*, was open with my husband about my feelings, fears, desires, and needs. This is perhaps one of the most important pieces of *Naseehah* I can give. Don't shut your husband out and don't let him shut you out. I'm telling you, this whole situation has brought me and my husband closer and that is because I was honest with him from the beginning and I continue to be.

You know, my husband said something to me around the time that I first found out about his polygynous endeavors, when I was in rebellion mode and was thinking, "Well, I'm going to stay with him and fulfill his rights as my husband, but that's about it. Nothing more, nothing less." We got into a discussion about how some sisters in dealing with their husbands taking on another wife, fall into the role of merely "functioning" in their marriage. It's like, they're not there because they want to be; they're just there to play a role. And so, my husband said to me, "You can either be A WIFE, or you can be THE WIFE." Over time I have come to realize that polygyny is a means for us to be the ultimate wife, but not only that, the ultimate companion for our husband. You want to strive to be as beloved to your husband as 'Aa'ishah, *Radee Allaahu 'Anha*, was to *Rasulullaah, Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*. She was more beloved to him than all her other co-wives. Competition with your co-wife is not a bad thing. In fact I would say it's inevitable. However, make sure you compete in those things that are pleasing to *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* and that will gain His pleasure. Compete in being a better *Muslimah*, in perfecting your *Eeman*. Compete in those things that will gain both the pleasure of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* and the pleasure of your husband. Use polygyny to your advantage and see it as an honor to be chosen by the Will of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* to be in a plural marriage. The best of women, the Mothers of the Believers, were co-wives *SubhaanAllaah*²⁶. As we know, *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* does not place a burden on a believer that they cannot bear, so if He chooses polygyny for you, you best believe that you can handle it, as long as you trust in Him.

²⁴ Advice.

²⁵ The Devil.

²⁶ Glorified be *Allaah*.



Monday, June 26, 2006

An Ode of Love: From a Polygynous Wife to a Polygynous Husband

It must be nice to always have someone to come home to, someone to lie down beside you, someone to hold up against you, someone to make love to. *Allaah* made women strong to place us in a marital position that includes spending nights alone, away from the one we love. It is well known that women have been created with a unique emotional vulnerability, a consequence of an essence stemming from that uniquely curved rib of Aadam. And yet it is women that are placed in some of the most emotionally trying life circumstances. As if even in our emotional fragility, there is a strength, an endurance unbeknownst to man. This strength comes from the extra struggle to survive the extra pain, the extra heartache. Perhaps men don't have to battle with their emotions the way that we do, however, without the battle one won't gain the strength to survive the pain. We may hurt more but this extra hurt is only a consequence of us loving more. *Allaah* has created everything in pairs. In order to know what pain feels like, we must experience the feeling of the absence of pain. In order to know what the absence of love feels like, we must experience what it feels like to be loved.

*Habeebee*²⁷, you always have an option of who to lie next to or to lie next to no one at all. Ah, if only I had such choice. I spend some nights lying alone, not by choice, but due to circumstance. I lay alone while you lay with her. And yet, how can I be mad at her when my battle of lonely nights is her battle as well. We share this battle just like we share your love. Sometimes we fail to realize that the splitting up of nights spent with you includes the splitting up of nights spent apart from you. I am not as alone in this as it seems. How can I battle someone whose battle is my very own?

Habeebee, I want you to know that even if I had the choice, the choice of whom to lie next to or to lie next to no one at all, if I had such a choice, I would always choose to lay beside you. Mi amor...My love.



Tuesday, June 27, 2006

Falling in Love

Is it possible to fall in love with your husband more than once? Because *Wallaahi* this morning I saw my husband and it felt like that first moment that I met him when I wanted nothing more than to rush home and pray to

²⁷ My love.

Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa that He bless me with a mate with such humbleness and piety. It has been four days and five nights since I last saw my *Habeeb*. He was away visiting his family. My husband was raised by women for the majority of his adolescence and so his relationship with the women in his family, particularly his mother and grandmother, is very tight. He has a special adoration for his grandmother who he affectionately calls "granny." I sincerely want his mother and grandmother to be secure in my ability to take care of their baby. They are true soldiers in this *Dunyaa*, have seen a lot, know how to bust a cap in someone's behind (literally!!!) and will not hesitate to do so in order to protect their family. I guess you could say I aspire to be like them in that respect.

On another note, the whole 15-year age gap between my husband and I is becoming more apparant than it was in the beginning of our marriage. Not on an intellectual level. We're on the same page there *Alhamdulillah*. But I guess in certain areas sometimes I think I'm not as experienced as he would like me to be. Before he married again this may not have been such a threat. But now with a co-wife, it's like, my insecurities are on full blast. Nah, but it's kind of cool at the same time because it makes me work harder to be pleasing to him and be the ultimate wife. Perfect those qualities that are most important in the sight of Allaah. And indeed with Allaah lies all success.



Sunday, July 02, 2006

An Anecdote

This weekend I had the pleasure of attending an *Islaamic* conference *Alhamdulillah*. There were many wonderful and insightful things said and done, however, one incident sticks out in my mind...

While in the bathroom making *Wuduu*²⁸, I was in the company of two sisters conversing about marriage. One sister was asking the other about her marriage, inquiring about when she had actually known that her husband was someone she wanted to marry and how long ago she had gotten married. I got the impression that the sister asking the questions knew the sister she was questioning as well as her husband. My impression was confirmed as truth upon a comment made by the questioning sister who stated that the husband of the sister whom she was questioning was such a wonderful husband when she was married to him, despite things not working out between them. Both sisters went on to speak very highly of the brother, who apparently is involved in polygyny. The way that the questioning sister was just so genuinely concerned about the happiness of this sister who was now married

²⁸ Ablution a *Muslim* makes before performing prayer.

to her ex-husband as well as the way that she spoke highly of him even though he was her ex was just so...*Masha'Allaah*²⁹. They spoke to one another like two best friends and the questioning sister spoke about her ex-husband like a sister would speak about her brother to a prospective suitor for him. She assured the sister who was now married to her ex that he was an excellent husband and she had no doubt that he would be just as great to the sister he was now married too. I admired the *Adab*³⁰ of these two sisters who, without a certain level of *Eeman* could have turned such a beautiful conversation into a threatening and uncomfortable one. Or better yet, the conversation may not have even happened at all. May *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* reward them for exhibiting such *Taqwa*³¹. *Ameen*.



Tuesday, July 04, 2006

Homecoming

Hubby is coming home tomorrow *Alhamdulillah*. I've been debating what I'm going to cook for dinner. I have some jumbo shrimp that I defrosted a day ago. I think I'll cook a shrimp and rice dish, spice it up a little, make something from the heart. My husband will eat anything I make, even if it doesn't tantalize his taste buds. He's not a picky eater at all *Alhamdulillah*; doesn't mind leftovers either, although now that I am home full-time I try to make something new every day. I've actually come to enjoy cooking. It's fun trying out new recipes and having someone to test them out on. I wonder whose food he likes better, mine or my co-wife's? It's funny, I'm already thinking about *Ramadaan* and how *Insha'Allaah* our family will sponsor an *Iftaar*³² at the *Masjid*³³ so my co-wife and I will get to cook together *Insha'Allaah*. That should be interesting...not just the cooking together but the going out into the community together. Polygyny isn't just new for us but for our community as well. A lot of people thought there would be lots of *Fitnah*³⁴ between me and my co-wife. Some people are even making attempts to cause *Fitnah* in our family. It's interesting to watch how people operate when presented with unknown situations, even if these situations are from the *Sunnah*. It's deep. How the *Sunnah* has become strange to the *Muslims*, sometimes even stranger than it is to the non-*Muslims*, to the point where the *Muslims* are more comfortable with and willing to embrace lifestyles contrary to the example of *Rasulullaah, Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa*

²⁹ *Allaah* has willed it. Indicates appreciation for an aforementioned individual or event.

³⁰ Manners, etiquette.

³¹ Fear of *Allaah*.

³² Meal the *Muslims* eat to break their fast.

³³ *Muslim* place of worship.

³⁴ Trial and discord.

Sallam, despite the fact that he was the best of examples. The *Sunnah* has become the exception, not the rule in this *Ummah*³⁵, to the point that those who strive to practice the *Sunnah* are labeled "extreme." *Astaghfirullaah*³⁶. May *Allaah* guide the *Muslims* in our affairs, and set us aright. Like *Rasulullaah*, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, said, *Islaam* began as something strange and will return to being something strange. So glad tidings are for the strangers.



Sunday, July 09, 2006

Even the Ones Who Are Strong Cry...

So...I had a breakdown this morning. As my husband packed up his things to leave and spend the next three nights with my co-wife, I stood by the door. I watched him as he put all his things neatly together, checking to make sure he had everything he would need. Then he looked up at me and asked me to give him a hug. I leaned in towards him and, as he held me, he whispered in my ear that he loves me and that he is not with me just by default, but because he sincerely wants to be with me. This comment was sparked by a question that I had asked him last night regarding if I bore him, if I am exciting enough for him. I'll explain what prompted my asking this. See, we went to a lecture last night *Alhamdulillah*. My husband is Mr. Socialite. There's not a place that we go where he doesn't know somebody. I'm not this way at all. It takes time for me to warm up to people. Not that I don't talk to anyone. When we go to new *Masaajid* or to an *Islaamic* event, I come in and I hug and *Salaam* sisters that I don't even know. I have no problem doing this. But...I'm not quick to just start a conversation with a random sister. It's nothing personal. That's just how I am. I'm more likely to be the one sitting back observing. I'll offer my help if needed. Like for instance, at the lecture we went to they served dinner and the sisters were starting to set up the food and I got up and offered to help. I'm not crazily quiet or shy. But I'm not all out there either.

So back to this morning...my husband hugged me, told me he loved me and that he was with me not just by default but because he really wants to be with me and...I just didn't want him to leave. Despite all of the times I've watched him walk out my door to her and have been fine, this morning something was different. This morning I didn't want to let him go. And so we're hugging and I started to feel this welling up in my chest and I'm trying to suppress it and then my eyes start watering and then, oh no, here come the tears. *Yaa Allaah, Yaa Rabb!!!* I really didn't want to cry in front of him, didn't want to

³⁵ World community of *Muslims*.

³⁶ I seek forgiveness from *Allaah*.

put him in that awkward situation of feeling like he's torn between two worlds. I didn't want to disrupt the fluidity and calm we had managed to uphold thus far as he moved between his two households, a fluidity that made it feel like he was living one life, not two. But I just couldn't contain myself. As I cried on his shoulder he tried pulling up my face as he asked me to give him a kiss. I wouldn't budge. At first he thought I was faking, that I really wasn't crying. But when he got a glimpse of my face and saw it was the real thing he began saying my name, asking me please not to cry, don't do this. I couldn't take it anymore and walked away from him, walked to our bedroom, laid on our bed, and cried some more. He was silent for a moment, then whispered he would be right back and walked out the door. When he came back, he came in the bedroom, leaned over me, kissed me on my cheek and told me that I have to be strong, that the wives of *Rasulullaah*, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, didn't cry. I told him that just because there may be no narrations of them crying doesn't mean that they didn't. He said I was right but that still, I have to be strong. Then he told me that he loves me. I told him that I love him too. He said okay and that *Insha'Allaah* he would see me tomorrow. I said *Insha'Allaah*. He then said *Salaam* and began walking away. As he walked away he grabbed my foot and started tickling it. I cracked a smile. He started laughing and said that he wanted to see me smile before he left. He got what he wanted. And then he left. And now here I am a little later typing this all out and I'm just thinking how I've been holding up so well since my husband got remarried, I guess it was about time my trials overtook me. After all, we can't always win the battles of this *Dunyaa* without a little struggle.

On a happier note...at the lecture I met two sisters that are co-wives. They actually have a third co-wife. *SubhanAllaah*, I was talking to one of them and I didn't know she was in polygyny and then her co-wife came up to us and she was like, "Hey, this is my co-wife," and I was just thinking *Masha'Allaah*, how I spent a good part of the night watching them interact and I thought they were really good friends never thinking they might be co-wives. It turns out that their husband, who is actually the *Imaam*³⁷ of the *Masjid* that the lecture was being held at, owns a house in a town not too far from where my husband and I live. *Insha'Allaah* they're planning on moving up my way for good. For now they just come on the weekends. Their husband actually bought a huge chunk of land and is planning to build them houses on a couple of acres and then to build a *Da'wah*³⁸ center and a camp for *Muslim* kids. *Alhamdulillah*, I was happy to meet them and to know that they would be living close to me soon due to the fact that there aren't many sisters that I know where I now live. When I got married and then finished school my husband uprooted me from all my close friends and from easy

³⁷ Leader of *Salaah*. Also can refer to the ruler of an *Islaamic* state.

³⁸ A call or propagation to something, in this case *Islaam*.

access to tons of *Islaamic* lectures and classes. I'm not resentful, just trying to deal with it all. It's a big change and I know that this is yet another test for me and for our marriage. *Insha'Allaah* we'll pass this one like we've passed all the rest, stronger, more knowledgeable, and more in love.



Friday, July 14, 2006

I Dedicate This to the Two Sisters Who Changed My Perspective on Polygyny...

I want to send out some big love to two sisters that mean the world to me and that I truly believe were placed in my life by the Will and *Qadr*³⁹ of *Allaah* to show me the beauty of polygyny. They know who they are so I won't call them out by name. But I'm telling you, if you want to see the personification of what can be beneficial and wonderful about polygyny you have got to spend just a couple of minutes with these two sisters who are also co-wives. They will make you seek out a polygynous marriage; they will make you feel like you are missing out on something by not being a co-wife. Before I met them, while I had wrapped my head around polygyny being something that is *Halaal*⁴⁰ and sanctioned by *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*, I still was of the opinion that, "It's just not something that I see myself doing." I wasn't even anticipating it, thinking about it, wanting it, nada. Then, by the Will and Mercy of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*, while I was away at school, I befriended two sisters that were co-wives. I initially met them separately. One I met at the local *Masjid* one night. She was there with her sister-in-law and another sister who was there to perform her *Nikaah*⁴¹, *Alhamdulillah*. We all hit it off on the spot and the sister-in-law invited me and some other sisters to her house for a sisters' potluck. It was at the potluck that I met the other co-wife, although I had no idea she was the co-wife to the first sister I met. *Subhaan'Allaah*, this sister was so sweet. You know how you meet some sisters and it's just like y'all grew up on the block together, were running around in diapers together as toddlers. This is the connection I had with this sister. And *Subhaan'Allaah*, it was the same connection that I had with her co-wife when I met her earlier. But anyway, on the way home from the potluck, one of the sisters that I came with revealed that the sister I had connected with at the potluck was the co-wife to the sister I had connected with at the *Masjid*. *Subhaan'Allaah*, I was in amazement. I mean, they both were at the potluck and, just watching them together, you would have thought they were close friends. I was just in awe. I guess because up until then I had never met anyone who was in a polygynous marriage. I had fallen

³⁹ Decree.

⁴⁰ Permissible.

⁴¹ *Muslim* marriage ceremony.

prey to all the negative hype about polygyny, that positive and successful experiences were the exception not the rule. I just had a very jaded image of polygyny based on biased opinion and conjecture, not any real examples. *Subhaan'Allaah* since I have become a co-wife *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* has blessed me to cross paths with a multitude of sisters who are in positive polygynous marriages, as well as sisters that are struggling with their situations. And may *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* bless them with *Sabr*⁴² and remove them from their situation if that is what is best. Needless to say, it's like a whole new world was opened up to me *Subhaan'Allaah*.

I pray that *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* enables me to shed light on the beauty of polygyny and change those who are skeptical or having a hard time accepting it the way that these sisters changed my heart. And, you know, the funny thing is that I don't even think they knew how much of an impact and influence they were having not just on me but on other sisters. They were just so real and just were themselves. And in their realness, through their example *Allaah* opened my heart to viewing polygyny not just as something that is *Halaal*, but as something that is appealing and something that I could see myself in. Nobody is perfect. No situation is perfect. Everybody has their struggles and I'm sure that these two sisters have their moments and struggles. But the important point is that they never let those moments consume them and they always maintained a certain *Adab* when they were around other sisters. Like I said, they just kept it real. I pray that *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* rewards them with the Ultimate Reward, *Jannat Al-Firdaus*. And I pray that *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* pours His *Rahmah*⁴³ and *Barakah* into their marriages and increases the love and mercy between them, strengthens their family in *Eeman* and *Ihsaan*⁴⁴ and *Taqwaa* of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa Insha'Allaah*. Can you tell how much I love them? I hope so...



Sunday, July 16, 2006

Morning Surprise

Last night was the first Saturday in a long time that I have been away from my husband. For quite awhile I had enjoyed the luxury of having my husband for two of his days off (he has three days off). Sometimes this luxury would be slightly interrupted by my husband's job. A whole day spent together suddenly turns into another day spent alone while my husband goes out in the field, climbing poles, cutting lines, digging holes, all to make

⁴² Patience.

⁴³ Mercy.

⁴⁴ Perfection, excellence.

some extra *Fuloos*⁴⁵ to support his newly expanded family. This weekend was one of those weekends. Friday, a day my husband usually has off, turned into a workday of overtime pay. I savored every moment of Friday night, knowing that in the morning my husband and I would not be sleeping in late like we usually do, waking up in the early afternoon. I would walk into the kitchen and cook some big breakfast while my husband would sit on a kitchen stool and read to me from some *Islaamic* book or article of choice. After eating we would spend the day practicing our Arabic, memorizing the next five *Aayaat* of the chosen *Surah* of the month. None of this would be happening because Saturday was not mine to claim this weekend. Instead my husband would be getting up early, putting in a few extra hours of work and then heading to my co-wife's house. I wouldn't be seeing my husband until Monday, sometime in the afternoon when he would stop by to get a hug and a kiss and maybe some lunch if he had time. Then it would be back off to work and then to my co-wife's house. Another night not my own. Well, this morning, Sunday morning, a morning anticipated to be spent alone, I heard a knock at the door. I rushed to put on my '*Abaayah*⁴⁶ and see who it was. I looked out the peep-hole and to my surprise...it was my hubby!!! Turns out he decided to work double overtime this morning and so being that his work area is near my house, he stopped by to pick up a few things and to "get some sugar," the phrase he uses to refer to giving me a kiss. His visit was short but sweet. I filled his water bottle with my home-made lemonade, we talked briefly and then...it was back off into the *Dunyaa* outside my door. As I watched him walk away I smiled thinking, "unanticipated sugar is extra sweet."



Breaking the Silence

A sister-friend of mine asked me the other night if I knew how my co-wife was dealing with everything, if she wanted to talk with me. I told her that I didn't know, that anything we have to say to each other we pass through my husband. Our not speaking thus far has not been out of bitterness or ill-feelings. It's just been the way things have operated. My friend was like, "You know, you can't go on this way forever." I said that I know, but for now, it's what is working for us. There was a point when I didn't want to even hear my co-wife's name, let alone speak to her. And then...things got easier *Alhamdulillah*.

In the beginning of this stage in my life, I truly believed in my heart that women that are marrying into a polygynous union have little to no struggle compared to what the already married wife has to go through. I mean, the

⁴⁵ Money.

⁴⁶ Cloak-like garment of a *Muslim* woman.

new wife is opting to be in the situation. The already married one is in it due to circumstance. Most of the time she doesn't seek out this new addition to her life. It's just thrust upon her and she is forced to deal...either by leaving or by staying, but nonetheless she has to deal. What could the new wife possibly have to be upset about, to fear? She is the chosen one. Over time, though, I have come to realize that new wives have struggles just like already married ones. Many of their struggles are different, but they both have battles to face.

Insha'Allaah Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa will make it easier on both my co-wife and I to be able to communicate. If not, honestly, I think I'll be fine. Whatever will make everyone involved comfortable and will keep the *Fitnah* out of our family, that is the path I am trying to take. And may *Allaah* guide us all in our affairs. *Ameen*.



Sunday, July 23, 2006

A Little Reprieve...

Alhamdulillah, these last few days have been quite relaxing. I have been pre-occupied by my hubby...and my thoughts. Thursday I went to visit with some sister-friends of mine that live about a two-hour train ride away. It was nice to be back in my old stomping grounds, nice to get out of the house, nice to be surrounded by my sisters in *Islaam*. One of the sisters actually just had a baby a week ago. It's her first *Alhamdulillah*. Little Abdullaah. *Masha'Allaah* he was the tiniest baby I have ever seen. And just slept and slept and slept the whole time I was there. He only woke up once to eat and then...back to sleepy time. I visited with this sister and her extended family. Her sister-in-law and I are also very close so I went to her house and then the sister with the newborn came over. Her sister-in-law lives with the sister's parents and two younger sisters. *Subhaan'Allaah* this family is just so beautiful. They are the type of people that you get around and your *Eeman* just feels like it's revitalized. Every time I leave from being in their presence my *Eeman* just feels so rejuvenated and my faith in *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* is renewed. The people we surround ourselves with should be constant reminders of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* in both speech and action and *Masha'Allaah* this family has perfected that role. May *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* reward them for their *Taqwaa*. *Ameen*.

I took hubby to this historic site yesterday. It's some famous mansion that sits on over 400 acres of land and has gardens and hiking trails. We took this one trail that led us to a beautiful waterfall. *Subhaan'Allaah*, the creation of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* is just so magnificent. My husband and I were the only visitors on the grounds. I suppose this is because we got there

early and also because the weather was a little muggy. It actually started raining while we were walking on the trail. *Subhaan'Allaah*, because we were walking underneath a canopy of trees, a heavy downpour was filtered into a light mist. The forest was our natural umbrella. On the way back my husband stopped me, pulled my arm and pointed downward to a tiny frog. It was the perfect combination of green and brown, camouflaged against the damp leaves that had fallen from the trees. I savor moments like these with my husband, moments of spontaneous discovery that are made all the more special by their being exclusively ours.

That is all that is going in my life right now. Nothing too grand. Just simple. The way I like it. Until next time...



Wednesday, July 26, 2006

Reunited and It Feels So Good...

Yes, you have guessed right. Hubby is coming home tonight. He stopped by briefly about an hour ago to get some water and lunch before heading back off to work. *Alhamdulillah*, I am happy to have company in the house once again.

I spoke to a sister-friend of mine that now lives in Saudi Arabia. *Subhaan'Allaah*, I haven't spoken to her in over a year. She's actually one half of the co-wife pair that I wrote of previously. It was so nice to hear from her and to know that her and her entire family are doing well. She loves Saudi, which is interesting considering that I hear so many bitter tales from sisters that have been there. The sister was telling me how they really take care of you there if you are able to get a decent job. Her husband teaches English at one of the schools there and they have him hooked up lovely. I hope to one day be reunited with her and her co-wife and their beautiful kids (co wife has four and she has one here and one on the way *Alhamdulillah*).

I've actually been tossing around the idea of moving overseas. I would love to move to Saudi, although I have also been thinking about Yemen and Egypt. The problem is... hubby isn't willing to leave the states permanently. He wants to go overseas to study the *Deen* and then come back to the US and give *Da'wah*. I feel him on that, especially because I feel like *Muslims* in the West are so disconnected from the '*Ulamaa*'⁴⁷ and authentic scholarship, although there are many groups and students of knowledge that are trying to bridge that gap *Alhamdulillah*. May *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* reward them for their efforts. *Ameen*. But yeah, hubby has this dream of me

⁴⁷ Scholars of *Islaam*.

becoming a *Shaykhah*⁴⁸. He would totally support my going overseas and studying, even if without him. I know of sisters that have done this, not just for studying purposes but also to make *Hijrah*⁴⁹ permanently. They have made that sacrifice, leaving their husbands behind, settling for two or three visits during the year. For many it works, but for many others it is a constant struggle. Those that are struggling are usually going through rough times because of their husband not fulfilling his duties in some way. That or they moved overseas thinking they could handle being away from hubby but have come to find out that living alone is just not their thing. I'm not sure if I could take being away from my husband for such long periods of time. One sister that lives in Egypt gave me *Naseehah* that if I'm not used to being alone, fending for myself, and if I'm very needy when it comes to hubby then it's probably best that I don't make the trip alone. Hahaha, I can't even last three days being away from him when he's with my co-wife. I don't know what makes me think I can last months at a time on a whole other continent. I suppose it's just wishful thinking and dreaming. *Allaah* knows best. Maybe in a year I'll be writing a book from Saudi, content and at ease...or crying about how I can't take being away from my husband...and he just left a day ago!!! We shall see...



Friday, July 28, 2006

Feeling Jipped...

So, hubby has been home since Wednesday night...well, technically he's been home. An opportunity to work overtime came up Thursday and so he spent all day Thursday at work as usual, came home for about an hour at night to eat dinner and do a conference call with the *Da'wah* committee that he is a part of, and then left to work overnight. Enter Friday morning...he came home right as I was finishing making my two *Sunnah Rak'aat* before *Fajr* prayer. We prayed *Fajr* together, then he stayed up for a little bit filling out his time sheet for work and doing some other stuff on the computer. I went into the bedroom and attempted to fall asleep. Before heading to bed he informed me that he had to get up in about two hours to head out... Once a month he gives the *Khutbah*⁵⁰ at a women's prison about an hour and a half from our house. He usually uses my car to drive there but apparently it has been overheating and acting up so he had to take it to the dealership early in the morning to get it checked out and then I guess he was planning on using my co-wife's car in the meantime. Anyway, I'm home alone AGAIN and I'm just feeling jipped. *Alhamdulillah* we spent Wednesday night together, but

⁴⁸ *Muslim*, female scholar.

⁴⁹ Migration for the sake of *Allaah* to the lands of *Islam*.

⁵⁰ Sermon.

all of Thursday I was robbed and I'm being robbed today yet again. And then tomorrow begins my co-wife's time with him. AHHHHHHHHH!!!! I'm so frustrated and just a tad bit angry. I hate feeling this way, feeling bad about wanting to spend time with my husband. I mean, is that a crime? I've already relinquished half of my week with him to a co-wife; the least I can get is the other half of the week. I know we're strapped for cash and overtime means extra cash, but still. I'm just struggling, feeling lonely, missing spending quality time with hubby. When he has a day off, and it's my day, I want him to spend it with me, not out trying to save the world or working extra hours or whatever else he can find to do other than be with me. And then, when he does get with me he's so tired from working so much that he's not up for anything. *A'uudhubillaahi Min Ash-Shaytaanir-Rajeem*⁵¹, may *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* forgive me for my complaining. Sometimes a sister just needs to vent you know?



Saturday, July 29, 2006

Apology Accepted...

A little after writing my "jipped" piece, I sent my husband a text message that displayed my frustration at our situation. I guess before reading my text he texted me "I'm coming home to you *Habeebee*" which made me feel a little foolish for sending my text. Then a few minutes later, I'm presuming right after he stumbled upon my text, he called me and asked, "Baby, why did you text me that? What's going on?" I proceeded to let him know that I texted him what I did because I was upset and my words were merely an expression of how I am feeling. He said, "Okay, well, we'll talk about everything when I get home."

About two hours later when he still hadn't reached home, I called him. He didn't pick up but called me right back and let me know that he was heading to my co-wife's house to drop off her car and pick up his work truck (he had used her car to go to the women's prison to give the *Khutbah* for *Jumu'ah*⁵²). When he got home, we sat down to eat dinner. By this time, *Alhamdulillah*, I was cooled down. I actually had been listening to a lecture about creating a happy *Islaamic* home and the brother made some very valid and interesting points about the rights and responsibilities of the wife and the husband. He mentioned how *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* says in the *Qur'aan* that men have been given a degree over women in that they (men) spend from their wealth to provide for women⁵³. The brother further explained that this

⁵¹ I seek refuge in *Allaah* from the accursed devil.

⁵² *Muslim* congregational prayer.

⁵³ *Surat Al-Baqarah* (2):228.

Aayah establishes the woman's right to be provided for by her husband and that it is this provision that legitimizes the man's degree over the woman. Connected to this point he also spoke about how *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* states in the *Qur'aan* that the believing women should stay in their houses and not go out unnecessarily like in the times of *Jaahiliyyah* when it was common for the women to roam the marketplaces and openly display themselves⁵⁴. The place of the *Muslim* woman is in the home and so because of this, the husband should ensure that he provides for his wife in a way that allows her to establish a comfortable and enjoyable abode being that her house is where she spends the majority of her time. A woman's home should not be like a prison; it should be a place of refuge and comfort for her. And the brother was saying how the husband's place is outside of the home (i.e. working to provide for his family), however, he should also take care to spend his time wisely, spending his days working and his nights teaching his wife or if he is unable to teach her then he should take her to classes outside to learn. And he should provide his wife with *Islaamic* books and lectures that she can reference when he is not around and so that she can grow in her understanding of the *Deen*. And he talked about how it is becoming commonplace within many communities in the US for the brothers to take on multiple wives and their wives are on welfare and the husband is not making an effort to work to provide for his family and when he is asked why he does not work he says that he is working to be a *Taalibul 'Ilm*⁵⁵ or he is working to be a *Da'ee*. And *Subhaan'Allaah* the brother was like, this is a foolish response and is not in accordance to the *Sunnah* or to the actions of the *Salaf*⁵⁶ for *Rasulullaah* and the *Sahaabah*⁵⁷ all earned a living IN ADDITION to being *Taalibul 'Ilm* and *Du'aat* and that a man is responsible to his family before he is responsible to the greater *Ummah* for *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* tells the believers to save one's self and one's family from the Fire whose fuel is men and stones⁵⁸ *Subhaan'Allaah*. As you can see I was really taking in this brother's words. It just got me to thinking because he was saying, to sum up my long recount, that women and men have been given their roles and responsibilities by *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* and that as long as we fulfill these and do not out step the limits set by our *Rabb* that *Insha'Allaah* we will be able to maintain healthy, *Islaamic* households. But once a brother or sister steps out of bounds or starts slacking that's when you start to see *Fitnah*. And particularly with the whole men being responsible for working and providing for their families, that a man being able to take care of his family gains him respect in the eyes of his wife but that once a man begins to fall short in this area that a woman will

⁵⁴ *Surat Al-Ahzaab* (33):33.

⁵⁵ Student of knowledge.

⁵⁶ Righteous, *Muslim* predecessors.

⁵⁷ Companions of the Prophet Muhammad.

⁵⁸ *Surat At-Tahreem* (66):6.

most likely lose a certain respect for him. And he said that a wife should encourage her husband to go out and work in order to take care of their family and in the process fulfill a commandment placed upon him by *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* and that a lot of wives, instead of encouraging their husbands to work, they want their husbands to stay home with them 18 hours out of the day and this is not the *Sunnah* nor is it in accordance with what *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* commanded the believers with, men and women. The brother wasn't saying that the husband should never be home or that he doesn't have his role within the home, for indeed he does. But, he was making the point that in terms of PRIMARY roles and responsibilities, the house is the abode of the wife and the husband is supposed to be "bringing in the paper" so to speak.

So I recapped all of that to say that, as I was listening to the brother's words and reflecting on my situation, I began to think, you know, things could be a lot worse. My husband isn't working extra hours to purposely get away from me...he's working to provide for me, provide for what is necessary so he can occasionally do something extra. He's working so that he won't fall short on his duties as a husband, both to me and to my co-wife, because he fears His Lord and he wants His Lord to be pleased with him. Honestly, even if he didn't have two wives, just from my husband's nature I know that he would probably still be putting in extra time so that he doesn't fall short. One of his biggest fears, after disappointing *Allaah*, is disappointing me and I know that he wants to do a lot of things for me that he will only be able to do if he has the *Fuloos*. We both spent our lives just "getting by," living pay check to pay check, not having any disposable income. We want more for ourselves and for our children *Insha'Allaah*. And when I say "more" I don't just mean material things. We want to be able to travel to go to lectures, to live in a community that is more active *Islaamically*, to perform *Hajj*, to be able to go overseas and study the *Deen*. All of these things can't happen with empty pockets. So I feel him. I know his struggle and I know that it is the struggle that is propelling him to make that extra cash.

So, back to me and hubby...when he came home we had a long conversation and he apologized, said he understood my frustration. He actually didn't realize that he would be leaving me the next day to go to my co-wife's house. He thought this Saturday was mine and that he would be able to spend it with me to make up for "jipped" time. I guess when he dropped off my co-wife's car she reminded him that he would be with her the following day and then he felt really bad and realized why I was so upset. Needless to say, we kissed and made up *Alhamdulillah*. And he promised me that he would make it up to me and asked me to be patient with him. *Insha'Allaah*...



Sunday, July 30, 2006

My Secret Life...

Okay, so my family doesn't know about my husband having another wife. My family is not *Muslim* although *Insha'Allaah* I have made a vow to become more adamant at giving them *Da'wah*, particularly my mother. My father isn't in my life. Mom raised me pretty much all on her own. She and I aren't very close, but I really have been trying to change that over the last year or so. I guess, once I became *Muslim*, that drew a wedge between us, a wedge that in one way or another we both helped to maintain. It's hard when your family isn't *Muslim*. It's like, outside of blood, I have little in common with my mom or the rest of my family. Our values and perceptions about life grow further and further apart. Them not being *Muslim* makes it hard sometimes to maintain the ties of kinship. But nevertheless, I keep holding on because I know that it is a duty placed upon me by *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*.

My mother is coming to visit me this week. This will be the first time she has come to my new home with my husband. She's on vacation for a week and half starting Wednesday. I suggested that she come Wednesday and stay for two nights. *Alhamdulillah*, this week is my week to spend Saturday with my husband and my nights start Wednesday so basically, I'm in the safe zone. I can live life like I am his one and only without having to worry about making some excuse for why he's not sleeping in my bed on a particular night. The funny thing is, my plan almost got stifled. My mom called me and wanted to know if she could change the days she would come and visit. First she just wanted to come a day later. That would mean she would leave Saturday sometime which would still place me in the safe zone but would cut into my QT time with hubby. When she suggested this change I was a little reluctant and I know she could sense my hesitancy. When she asked me why her coming a day later was a problem, I tried to play it off, said something about it being one of my hubby's days off and so I like to spend it with him being that he's always working. My explanation was part of the truth. I couldn't tell her the real reason why Saturday was so precious to me or why any QT time with hubby is extra special to me at that. Then, after convincing her to stick to coming on Wednesday, she says, "Well, maybe I can just come the beginning of next week, like on Monday." AHHHHH!!!! No way. That would totally just expose everything being that hubby would be with my co-wife. Here it is my mom is thinking she's being considerate by coming in the beginning of the week that way it won't interfere with my weekend with hubby, when really, I kind of need her to interfere just a little so that way she won't know that there are days when interference wouldn't be an issue. So anyway, when she suggested coming in the beginning of next week I automatically shot her down and then had to catch myself. She was a little taken aback by my response and asked me "What, do you have plans for the

beginning of the week?" Uhhhhh, not necessarily, but my hubby does. No no of course I can't say that. Again, I came up with some lame explanation, something about it being the start of the week and I'd just rather her come when the week was in full swing. I think she bought it, however strange she may think I am now.

So you're probably wondering if I ever plan on telling my mom and why I am so reluctant to tell her. Well, yes I plan on telling her... someday... in the future...when I give her some grandkids and she's so old that she's worried more about her life than my own. I know, that's bad. But, the thing is, my mom is still coping with so many other changes I have made as a by-product of my being *Muslim*. Within the small time span of a few months I announced I was getting married to a man almost twice my age who I had only known for a couple of months and then began wearing *Niqaab*⁵⁹. She had more trouble accepting my wearing *Niqaab* than my getting married. And even with the *Niqaab*, she hasn't really accepted it...she's just tolerating it. Now to throw in polygyny. Puleeeaaasse. Ha! I don't think so. I distinctly remember her telling my husband prior to us getting married that if he ever took another wife she would "not think very much of him" (this was her nice way of saying some not so nice things). In the same conversation I expressed to her that my husband taking another wife is something that I would accept and something that I did not have a problem with so she knows that. But still... I just can't tell her. Not now. I just don't want to deal with the *Fitnah* and the stress that I know will come along with it. I'm not ready for all of that. And then I'm thinking how I finally have gotten to a point where I feel more comfortable giving her *Da'wah* and she has become a little bit more receptive... revealing my secret life would just drive that wedge right back in between us. Ya *Allaah*, ya *Rabb*, what am I to do?



Friday, August 11, 2006

It's Been Awhile...But I'm Back

My mom left yesterday. She was here for three days and two nights *Alhamdulillah*. Everything went extremely well. No talk of my polygynous situation. The war between Israel and Lebanon, her job, Iraq's civil war, America's jacked up foreign policy were all topics of choice. I took her to this quaint little college town about 45 minutes from my house where they have little antique shops. She ended up buying two pairs of earrings for less than \$20. I bought hubby a new bracelet. He has this chain link one that is a little old and needs to be cleaned so I figured I'd just surprise him with a new one. I didn't get anything for myself; didn't really see anything that drew me

⁵⁹ The full face-covering of a *Muslim* woman, sometimes exposing the eyes.

in. One night mom and I went to this Egyptian restaurant that is only about 10 minutes from my house, up the mountainside literally. It's actually more of a diner but I call it an Egyptian restaurant because an Egyptian family owns it and the decor has an Egyptian flavor. Anyway, it was nice to be around my mother and have someone to spend my weekdays with. I gave her this book that I recently finished reading called "From My Sister's Lips" by Naima B. Roberts. It's kind of like a memoir of this sister's journey to and through *Islaam*. Interspersed in her story she shares the stories of other reverts to *Islaam*. Basically the intended purpose behind the book is to challenge misconceptions/biases about *Islaam* and *Muslim* women, but in a very intimate and personal way. It really is an excellent book *Masha'Allaah*. Very reminiscent of my own experiences in this *Deen*. I suppose that's why I connected with it as much as I did.

Everything in my married life is going well *Alhamdulillah*. Last week my husband and I had a deep conversation about where he wants our family ("our" including my co-wife) to go. He talked about how he really wants to be in this 'til death do us part, how he understands that she and I are still coming to terms with the whole situation but he really wants us both to be content and secure with it all before he dies. His biggest wish is that upon his death, his two families are united and not bickering and fighting. He doesn't want our personal animosities, jealousies, and insecurities to weigh heavy on him in the grave along with all the other trials he will undoubtedly be going through, trials that we all must go through upon leaving this *Dunyaa*. He said he's going to have enough to worry about, that he wants his family unit to be strong, to make *Du'aa* for him. He wants any children that she and I may have with him to get along, to know that they are family and to treat each other as such, to not be mired in the drama of their mothers' ill-feelings toward one another. I looked at him as he shared all of this with me and wanted so much to be able to promise him that his wishes would be a reality. The truth is, his wishes are my very own. *Insha'Allaah Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* will allow my co-wife and I to exemplify the desires of our dear husband, sincerely and for the sake of *Allaah*.



Saturday, August 19, 2006

Living By My Own Demands...

One night about two weeks ago hubby and I got into a heated discussion about his talking to my co-wife in my presence. More specifically, I had become upset when on more than one occasion my co-wife had called him late at night and not only did he take the call but he proceeded to talk to her in my face, one time taking the conversation to another room and staying on the phone for close to 15 minutes. I think I've made it quite clear my issues with the lack of time my husband and I have together, as well as my feelings about our night time together, so you can imagine how his talking to my co-wife for more than a minute or two on my nights made me feel. The night that he spoke to her for 15 minutes, instead of speaking to him immediately and addressing the problem, I got an attitude, huffing around the house, trying to "show" that I was upset, all as a means of getting his attention and having him ask me what the problem was.

When hubby finally did get off of the phone, he ignored my show and proceeded to go about his business as if there wasn't a stench of unhappiness in the air. A couple of times during the night I attempted to talk to him, but stopped myself for fear that I would say something out of place (i.e. begin to curse him, my co-wife, or even worse, our marriage). I have never done this before, but the potential has been there more than a couple of times. Rarely do I get angry, and when I do get angry, I get this knot in my chest and I feel like I'm going to cry. Go figure...I cry when I'm sad, cry when I'm happy, and cry when I'm angry. *Subhaan 'Allaah*. Anyway...

In an attempt to calm myself down and bring some clarity to my head, I called two sisters who both gave me the most beautiful *Naseehah*... go make *Wuduu*, make two *Raka'at*, ask *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* to bring ease to your heart and then, when you have gotten yourself together, go and talk to your husband. Whatever you do, don't go to bed angry at him. I took the advice given to me and, when it was time for hubby and I to go to bed, I took a deep breath and then said, "So, you're not going to ask me why I'm upset?" The lights were off in the room and we weren't facing each other, but I could hear hubby sigh and he might have even chuckled lightly to himself. Just because he didn't acknowledge my show didn't mean he didn't know I was putting one on. Truth is, I knew that he knew I was upset and probably even knew why. After some silence he said, "No baby, I wasn't going to ask, I was just going to wait for you tell me...why are you upset?" So I proceeded to tell him that out of respect for my co-wife when it's her night with him, I don't call him. I think maybe once, twice at the most I have called him when she was with him in the three-and-a-half months they have

been married. And those times that I did call and they were together, it was because I thought that he was by himself. I make a huge effort not to cut into their time, especially because I know how it makes me feel when he talks to her during my time with him. I said, now, I understand that he is going to have to call her to check up on her and that I have no problem with. But that certainly doesn't take more than a couple of minutes and it's him calling her, not the other way around. I proceeded to let him know how hurt I feel when she calls him, how much it bothers me. There are times when he is with her that I will want to call him and share something with him, but out of respect for her, I don't call. I wait until he comes home to me. So, I expect the same from her *Insha'Allaah*.

Hubby was silent for a moment and then he said, "You're right. And, outside of tonight I can't think of any other time that she has called. But I hear what you're saying and I will try my best to limit the amount of time I talk to her when I am around you seeing how it upsets you." Now, I could have pushed the issue further. But no, seeing my hubby's willingness to concede to my feelings and knowing how understanding that he really is, I let it go. I rolled over, hugged him, and we fell asleep.

I share all of this with you because I am sitting here on my days alone and I want so much to call hubby and speak with him. I have been fighting the temptation, reminding myself of that night two weeks ago. *Subhaan 'Allaah* it's amazing how we can make demands and then find them hard to abide by. *Alhamdulillah*, hubby is coming home tomorrow...and has a surprise for me!!! I can't wait to relinquish this battle.



Friday, August 25, 2006

Co-Wife Benefits

In the midst of my plotting and planning to make *Hijrah*, I have been making spontaneous lists in my mind of the pros and the cons of such a move. Undoubtedly one of the most important things I have been tossing around in my head is the reality of leaving my husband here in the states, what this actually means. For sure my attachment to my husband is very strong to the point where just the thought of being a short distance away from him brings me sadness, let alone thousands of miles away. When I was first contemplating making *Hijrah*, I just couldn't get past feeling angst at not only leaving my husband, but also leaving my wifely duties. For sure when a *Muslimah* decides to live countries apart from her husband, seeing him possibly once, maybe twice a year, with this decision she is relinquishing a great deal of not only her rights as a wife, but also a great deal of her responsibilities. For me, a *Muslimah* who has chosen to be a stay-at-home

wife, who revels in the opportunities to cook meals for her husband, rub her husband's back when he comes home sore from work, help her husband perfect his pronunciation of Arabic and memorization of the *Qur'aan*, read *Islaamic* literature with her husband, in short, make her husband's house a home, all actions done not just to seek the pleasure of her husband but also to seek the pleasure and reward of her *Rabb*, moving half way across the world and giving up the ability to perform these acts of kindness is giving up one means of attaining *Jannah*. Not to say that you can't be a dutiful and good wife living in a different country from your husband. Surely, *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* will reward you for the trials of being alone, of guarding your chastity during these times, of remaining patient during any trials that He may see fit to throw your way. But, the little everyday things, things that are dependent on physical contact between you and hubby, these things are lost to you. I guess, what I'm trying to say is, I felt like by making *Hijrah* without my husband I would be abandoning one of the most beautiful and rewardable responsibilities that *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* has given women. For sure being a wife is not the only role of a woman, but in the sight of *Allaah*, it is of the highest priority and of high regard and reward. And, I just couldn't see giving a huge part of that role up, even with the consent of my husband.

Saying all of that I guess it seems clearer why studying Arabic overseas for a shorter period of time is more appealing to me. But there is something more, something that I must admit. As I make plans to leave my husband, I realize that I am not leaving him alone, for he will have my co-wife to come home to. And what may be surprising to some is that while this fact could be the cause of great jealousy, it in fact brings a certain calm to me. I am at ease with the fact that while I am gone, my husband will be taken care of. I am at ease with the fact that while I am gone, my husband will not be alone. It's funny how what at times brings you pain and loneliness in one circumstance, can bring you comfort in another.



Sunday, September 10, 2006

It Has Been Two Weeks...

Subhaan'Allaah, has it been two weeks already?!!!! I guess I just got caught up in the daily comings and goings of my life, which, by the way, hasn't been too eventful. Married life for the most part has been calm and cool. Little bouts of emotional *Fitnah* here and there, but nothing I feel the need to vent about. I have been doing a lot of reflecting lately though. About what you ask? Well, about many things. Dependency. Trust. Love.

Over the past week I have watched one of my dearest friends cope with the possibility of divorce, the ending of a marriage that almost from its inception has been a never-ending whirlwind of trials and tests. In addition I met a sister who at the time of our meeting was less than two weeks away from the end of her 'Iddah⁶⁰. Speaking to these two sisters has reminded me of the purpose of this life, but even more important the purpose of being tested by *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. *Fitnah* in this life is inevitable. *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* has made this clear in the Noble *Qur'aan* when He poses the question to the believers, do we think that we believe and yet will not be tested⁶¹? *Fitnah* in this *Dunyaa* has a purpose. It is a means of renewing our faith, of solidifying our belief in *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*, in His Oneness, in His *Qadr*. It is a means of distinguishing those who truly believe from those who express belief on their tongues while their hearts remain empty.

I remember in the prime of my dealing with my husband's polygynous endeavors, I went through a very low point. Not in my *Eeman*, but in my emotions. I was hurting, trying to sort through numerous fears and insecurities. And yet it was in the abyss of my emotional low that my belief, trust, love, and ultimate reliance on *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* reached a height and a clarity that I had never known before. Instead of questioning *Allaah's Qadr*, I submitted to it while at the same time asking *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* to ease my pain and suffering, to assist my heart and mind in accepting His Divine Decree. This is the difference between those who truly believe in *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* and those who are without firm and true *Eeman*. The *Muslimeen*, the *Mu'mineen*, they accept the trials and tests of this life. They do not question *Allaah's Qadr*. I remember in a response a *Shaykh* was giving to a questioner regarding the conflict between Lebanon and Israel, the *Shaykh* mentioned that in an authentic *Hadeeth*, the Prophet Muhammad, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, is reported to have said that there will be a group of people who will enter *Jannah* solely based on the trials and afflictions they suffered in this *Dunyaa*. *Subhaan 'Allaah*, rarely do we view the *Fitnah* of our daily lives as a possible means to our attainment of *Jannah*. One of the many keys to Paradise we so easily let slip through our fingers.

Watching the two sisters who are facing divorce, as well as reflecting on my own experiences of marital trials, I find one common link between all of our responses and that is that the trials which we have went through or are still going through reinforced for us that truly the only One that we can depend upon, the only One that we can rely on is *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*.

⁶⁰ Waiting period of a *Muslim* woman before she is officially divorced. The period of an 'Iddah is equivalent to three menstrual cycles (or three months for the woman who no longer menstruates).

⁶¹ *Surat Al-'Ankabuut* (29):2.

Yes, on a surface level we rely on other things in this *Dunyaa*. We rely on food and water to nourish our bodies and keep us healthy. We rely on friends and family for support, both emotional and otherwise. And yet, our reliance on these things is not possible were it not for *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* creating these things and then placing them in our lives. Our sustenance in this life does not produce itself. Its source is *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*, the One Who exists without a source, without a place, without a beginning or an end. And so, it is only when we recognize this, when we put our total trust in *Allaah*, when we solely depend on *Allaah*, that we are able to emerge from our trials and tests with our *Eeman* intact, if not stronger than before we were afflicted.

You know, *LA ILAAHA ILA ALLAAH*⁶² has become an empty slogan. It has become an empty, fluid phrase on the tips of so many tongues. So many people utter this most blessed phrase without a firm belief in or understanding of its meaning, to the point where some *Muslims* believe that it is enough to have belief in the heart without action of the limbs. This is an impossibility, for our actions are an affirmation of our belief. One cannot exist without the other. A true and sincere believer in *LA ILAAHA ILA ALLAAH* is a *Muslim* woman losing her child and instead of asking *Allaah* "why" she says "*Inna lillaahi wa inna ilayhi raji'uun* - from *Allaah* we come and to *Allaah* we return." A true and sincere believer in *LA ILAAHA ILA ALLAAH* is a *Muslim* man with two wives and five kids who loses his job, when offered the opportunity to gain money by *Haraam*⁶³ means in order to ease his financial burdens, he instead says, "My *Rizq*⁶⁴ is with *Allaah*." A true and sincere believer in *LA ILAAHA ILA ALLAAH* is a *Muslim* woman who is able to part with her husband for the sake of *Allaah* just as easily as she is able to remain with him for the sake of *Allaah*. And when I say "part" I mean either through death or through divorce. This last example is crucial for it is the example that so many of my sisters are struggling with currently. We must know how to distinguish between remaining with our husbands because we fear *Allaah* versus remaining with our husband's because we fear the unknown. We must be careful not to mask the latter as the former. We must know how to distinguish between loving our husbands for the sake of *Allaah* versus loving our husband's for some other purpose. "Passionate love" can only be beneficial when it is secondary to love for the sake of *Allaah*. "Passionate love" on its own is destructive. It is the love that intoxicates, that impedes one's judgment to the point where one will commit *Haraam* if their husband (or wife) tells them to. All for a "love" that is based on our own whims and desires.

⁶² There is none worthy of worship except *Allaah*.

⁶³ Impermissible.

⁶⁴ Sustenance.

I end with this:

"And if a woman fears cruelty or desertion on her husband's part, there is no sin on them both if they make terms of peace between themselves; and peace is better...But if they separate (by divorce), *Allaah* will provide abundance for everyone of them from His Bounty. And *Allaah* is Ever All-Sufficient for His creatures' needs, All-Wise (*An-Nisaa* ' 4:128,130)."



Friday, September 29, 2006

Hubby Hikmah

On a late-night drive home from praying '*Ishaa* at the *Masjid*, my husband and I conversed about polygyny, in particular the possibility of another couple in the community making this blessed part of the *Sunnah* their reality. I think I have mentioned previously that my family is the one and only polygynous marriage on the block so-to-speak. It has been quite interesting watching and hearing the numerous reactions to this new addition to the community. Every now and then people try to add their two cents into the equation, oftentimes showing their lack of knowledge about this particular *Sunnah* by their innovative suggestions and comments. Anyway...as hubby and I drove home we talked about the struggle that many sisters have in dealing with their husband taking another wife and I shared with him my own reflections about our situation including how I went about coping with it all and eventually embracing the *Qadr* of *Allaah*. It was in these reflective moments that my hubby shared some reflections of his own...

"You know, I was having a conversation with the brothers and I was sharing with them that when our wives do something that is pleasing to us and/or a sign of their *Eeman*, whether it's them reaching out to someone in the community or them submitting to polygyny and assisting us in being successful in its practice, we as men walk around with pride, as if we are the ones who are performing these honorable actions, as if we are the ones who are gaining the reward. We operate as if our wives are doing these things for us, when in fact, it has nothing to do with us. Yes, our wives are pleasing us but they are pleasing us because they know that in pleasing us they are pleasing *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. And so, in the end, it's not about us. It's about them and their Lord."

I let out a soft yet reaffirming "*Na'am* (yes)" to my husband's beautiful words, thinking about how blessed I am to have a husband who has such insight and understanding. By no means is he perfect, but it is his recognition of his imperfection as well as his sincere striving to "hold fast to

the Rope of Allaah" that makes me love him more with each day. May Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa bless him, ease any hardship that may befall him, make him of those who are successful in this *Dunyaa* and in *Al-Aakhirah*⁶⁵, and grant him the highest station in *Jannah*. Ameen.



Letter to My Husband

Monday, May 8, 2006

Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem. Alhamdulillah Rabbil 'Aalameen.

Assalaamu 'Alaykum wa Rahmatullaahi wa Barakaatuh my beloved. Subhaan'Allaah, I never thought that I would feel the way I am feeling about you. Feelings of uncertainty. Feelings of doubt. Feelings of insecurity. You know, I've come to realize a few things over the last month or so, things about myself and about you, about us. This letter is my attempt at venting my emotions, thoughts, feelings to you and an attempt to step outside myself and see myself. It's probably going to be long with some repetition, maybe even a little incoherence. And yet, it is something I feel necessary for me to share with you, whether or not you choose to partake in my invitation.

I have come to realize that you have been right about so many things that you have said, so many things about me, about how I do or don't feel about you. Baby, I love you. In that there is no doubt. And my love, beyond it being Fillaah⁶⁶, there is an element of passion, of conviction. There is an element of "I'm with you not just to function; I am with you because I genuinely want to be with you." And yet, you have been right all along when you have expressed that you feel that I am not in love you. In admitting that, I must also share with you that I aspire to be in love with you. I have never given up on that and I will never give up on it Insha'Allaah, not unless you give up on it first. And I think, you know, while there may be some losses in me not being in love with you right now at this early stage in the game, there is also much wisdom in it, for I know that if you were to choose not to want to be with me, the pain of walking away would be less than if I was in love with you. Please don't take this as my saying that I want to leave you. That is the farthest thing from my

⁶⁵ The after-life.

⁶⁶ For Allaah.

mind. In fact, I think that I would even stay with you if I were to never fall in love with you, even if you were to fall out of love with me, I would still stay because truthfully I believe that our marriage could still be so fruitful and beneficial and that we could still work together and be just to one another without being in love. I am beginning to see that more and more. I am beginning to see that even if we were to not be in love with one another, that wouldn't automatically mean that we would just be functioning in our marriage to one another. I truly believe that our union has a purpose, a purpose beyond what we can even envision. Even if we were to be married but feel for one another the way a friend feels for another friend, nothing more nothing less, I still think we could make it work. I believe in us, I believe in our power to carry each other towards the path to Jannah. I believe in you. I believed in you almost from the moment I met you. Subhaan'Allaah, I was reading over the writing that I had written after the first time I met you and it just reminded me of why I married you. Subhaan'Allaah, I married you for Deen; that was what attracted me to you. You drew me in with your Eeman, with your humbleness, with your Adab. You drew me in with the Nuur⁶⁷ that emitted from you every time you smiled. Subhaan'Allaah, that was the one thing that I remembered about you physically after that first time we met. I couldn't remember anything but your smile because there was such warmth and truthfully, it reminded me of this feeling that I got from this dream that I had. I was in the middle of one of the battles between the Muslims and the Kufaar⁶⁸ back during the time of Rasulullaah, Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam, and Hamzah⁶⁹ came and rescued me and we started floating towards this big bright light. It was so peaceful. Your smile brought that peacefulness to me. It still does. You still do.

I want you to know that I want what is best for you. I've wanted that from the beginning. And I have always believed that I could be that person that was best for you if you gave me the opportunity. I still want to be that person. But I need to know if you want me to be that person. I need you to be honest with me. If you're not feeling this, if you're not feeling me, then please, let me know. And I would ask you, even if you weren't feeling me, I would still like to be married to you, I would still like to do my best to be of benefit to you in this Dunyaa and help you attain a station in Jannah Insha'Allaah. I trust that regardless of how you felt about me you would treat me justly and so, if you gave me the opportunity, I would remain with you. I

⁶⁷ Light.

⁶⁸ Disbelievers in the Oneness of Allaah and in the Prophet Muhammad.

⁶⁹ Hamza ibn 'Abd Al-Muttalib, the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad.

have no intention of going anywhere. I am committed to taking this marriage to the farthest height it can go. I am committed to you, to being a dutiful wife and being a means by which Insha'Allaah you get to Jannah. I am committed to you in this way because I believe that you want to facilitate the same for me. That's what a marriage in Islaam is all about; both partners should be of benefit to one another in this Dunyaa for the obtainment of a blessed Aakhirah. So even if we didn't have that Dunyaa love, I would stay with you for the Aakhirah. I would still be your partner in that pursuit. This is my word.

I know this is really long as I warned you and it's not my most eloquent piece, but I pray that you have been able to follow me and get what I am saying. I guess, I just want you to know that I'm committed. Whatever you want to do. I'm focused and my purpose in this marriage is clear, with or without the "passionate" love. And know, I'm growing towards that. I am growing towards being in love with you. I just need you to nurture that love...don't give up on me now. We've only just begun...

Your Wife Fillaah

Part Two: Embracing Allaah's Decree

"It may be that you dislike a thing and Allaah brings through it a great deal of good."

~ Surat An-Nisaa' (4):19

My experience within polygyny has really shown me a lot regarding the intricacies of this marital institution, particularly when it comes to the relationship between fellow sister-wives. The whole notion of "distance makes the hearts grow fonder" does not apply in this scenario. In fact, distance and silence allows us as women to remain in denial about our husband's "other life." It allows us to not have to truly deal with our insecurities and weaknesses in *Eeman*. Forging some type of relationship with our sister-wives necessitates an acceptance of polygyny not only as something ordained by *Allaah*, but also as something that is ordained by *Allaah* AND practiced by our husband. It's one thing to accept something as being a part of the *Deen*; it is quite another to accept something as being a part of your life. And I would argue that really true acceptance of that which has been ordained by *Allaah*, whether it is fard or not, if it is something that is a part of *Islaam*, a part of the way of life that you profess belief in and submission to, then true acceptance includes not just believing in something as this abstract concept, but also as a possible reality within your own life.

How easily we pronounce belief on our tongues, and yet when we are tested with something that is a part of that belief we come up with rationalizations and excuses; we conjure up baseless limitations and conditions, all in order to avoid facing our own deficiencies in *Eeman* because we do not want to have to admit to ourselves or to *Allaah* that we find trouble in submitting COMPLETELY to His Will. We do not want to have to admit to our own imperfection, even when it is clear that perfect we are not, that perfection is an attribute only befitting the Creator and not His creation. We do all of this, when in all actuality it would be much better for us to admit to our shortcomings and seek repentance and guidance from *Allaah* instead of trying to fashion *Islaam* into something that is palatable to our own tastes.

Subhaan'Allaah, we all have weaknesses in *Eeman*. We all have those things that at one point or another we find difficulty in accepting and submitting to as a part of the *Deen* of *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. For

some sisters, their struggle is *Hijaab*⁷⁰. For others it's *Salaah*. For others it's guarding the tongue from backbiting and gossiping. And for some it is polygyny. However, we must be careful not to rob *Islaam* of its completeness and perfection in order to avoid having to confront that which makes us uncomfortable.



Saturday, October 14, 2006

Disliking Something for Yourself vs. Disliking That Something Was Ordained By Allaah

While I have no doubt that there are sisters out there that love that which is ordained by *Allaah*, including polygyny, yet dislike polygyny for themselves, I also have no doubt that a great deal of sisters' dislike for polygyny in their own lives is a direct product of their dislike and/or hatred of polygyny as an ordainment from *Allaah*. And I would also argue that there is a very, very, very thin line between disliking something for oneself and disliking/hating something ordained by *Allaah*. In fact, when we look at those things within the *Muslim* community that *Muslims* have problems accepting and implementing, whether they are obligatory or not, BECAUSE OF their dislike of these things personally and/or as an ordainment of *Allaah*, we will find that the list is short and so then we must ask ourselves "Why?" For instance, the abandonment of *Sunan* such as *Tahajjud*⁷¹, such as making *Salaah* in the *Masaajid* (for men who it is obligatory upon), such as assisting the *Masaakeen* (poor) and the orphans and things such as these, are not abandoned because of dislike or hatred for these things by those who neglect them as much as they are abandoned due to laziness and miserliness. Abandoning something because of laziness versus abandoning it because of a dislike for it (personally and/or as an ordainment by *Allaah*) are two very different reasonings with very different impetuses. So again, I pose the question, why do we as *Muslims* dislike certain things and not others? Why do we as *Muslims* have problems with certain ordainments of *Allaah* and not with others? Why do some sisters claim that they would rather their husband commit *Zinaa*⁷² and they not know about it, than for their husband to marry another wife? Why do some sisters not have a problem with polygyny if their husband is marrying an old widow or an old, infertile woman, yet object to polygyny if their husband chooses to marry a sister younger than them or even their same age? What is the impetus behind such a double standard?

⁷⁰ The modest clothing of a *Muslim* woman, which includes the covering of her head and chest.

⁷¹ The Night Prayer.

⁷² Adultery.

"...and it may be that you dislike a thing which is good for you and that you like a thing which is bad for you... (Al-Baqarah 2:216)."

Now, please, do not take my words as me saying that there is no way that you can dislike something for yourself without disliking that it is ordained by *Allaah*. That is not what I am saying. However, what I am saying is that there is a thin line between the two and that many sisters use "personal dislike" as a scapegoat for "general hatred" of an ordainment of *Allaah*.

In a *Fatwaa*⁷³ by *Shaykh* Saalih Al-Fawzaan in response to the question, "What is the ruling of the one who dislikes AND makes others detest the marrying of four wives?," the *Shaykh*, *Hafidhahullaah*⁷⁴, stated:

"It is not permissible to detest or chase people away from anything that *Allaah* The Most High has legislated. This is considered to be apostasy in the religion of *Al-Islam*.

Allaah, The Most High said, 'That is because they hate that which *Allaah* has sent down (this *Qur'aan* and *Islaamic* laws, etc.), so He has made their deeds fruitless.' [*Surat Muhammad* 47:9]

So this affair is serious. The cause of this is the effects of the (false) propaganda of the disbelievers. Those who chase people away from *Al-Islam* and throw doubts, which the naive individuals from the *Muslims* fall victim to; those *Muslims* who are unaware of the wisdom of the *Islaamic* Legislation, and one of the greatest examples of this is polygamy, which bears benefits for the women firstly, then the men."⁷⁵

And so, you do have sisters that not only dislike polygyny for themselves, but also seek to discourage and dissuade other *Muslimaat* from the practice, both directly and indirectly, sometimes going as far as to instill dislike and/or hatred of the practice in the hearts and minds of others *wa Na'uudhubillaah* from such actions.

Let me be clear that in no way do I believe that a *Muslimah* who is in polygyny is a better *Muslim* than a *Muslimah* who is not in polygyny. Nor do I look down upon those sisters who are not in polygyny. I do however have a problem with sisters who have a dislike and hatred for that which *Allaah* has ordained for reasons that do not fall within the bounds of what is excusable according to *Sharee'ah*⁷⁶. If you're not one of those sisters then

⁷³ Religious verdict.

⁷⁴ May *Allaah* preserve him.

⁷⁵ From *Al-Muntaqaa min Fataawa*, Volume 3, Page 230.

⁷⁶ *Islaamic* Law.

Masha'Allaah. If you are then *Masha'Allaah*. We all are at different levels in our *Eeman* and are stronger in certain areas than in others. You have sisters who are stronger in their recitation of *Qur'aan*. You have sisters who are stronger in their memorization and understanding of *Qur'aan*. You have sisters who have a better grasp on matters related to '*Aqeedah*⁷⁷. You have sisters who are stronger in their performance of *Salaah*, not only its physical performance but performing it with *Ikhlās*⁷⁸. And the list goes on and on. Some of these strengths are apparent and known by others. Some are not. Everything is known to *Allaah Al-'Aleem*⁷⁹.

Regarding the issue of a brother marrying another wife without telling his current wife, first if it is not known, the brother does not have to inform or seek permission from his current wife. However, the '*Ulamaa* have stated that it is in good manners and kind treatment that the husband do what he can to bring ease to the situation for the current wife so as to reduce *Fitnah*. Now, I'm not going to use this space to defend husbands who marry secretly because the '*Ulamaa* have already done so, however, I will say this: Brothers getting married without telling their current wife (or wives) may not be motivated by them being ashamed of their actions as much as it is motivated by *Muslimaat's* disdain and hatred for polygyny. It is excellent if a *Muslimah* and a brother discuss this issue before they get married, as well as, occasionally throughout their marriage being that people's feelings may change over the course of time. However, the bottom line is if a brother wants to marry again, even if he didn't express this intention at the onset of your marriage, he can do so. It's you who has to decide if you're going to rock with it. And if not, sincerely ask yourself why?



Friday, October 13, 2006

The Key to Reaping Polygynous Blessings

I sincerely believe that the key to reaping many polygynous blessings is everyone involved having the correct intentions (*Fillaah*) and being sincerely committed to making things work. The sisters involved really have to both want to at the very least assist their husband in doing things in the correct manner, at the most want to assist each other in making things work. While I know that it is possible for polygyny to work without the co-wives having a personal relationship with one another, I also think that when both sisters are able to forge some type of relationship, however small or large, and this relationship fosters a certain respect and caring for your fellow sister-wife,

⁷⁷ *Islamic* creed.

⁷⁸ Sincerity.

⁷⁹ The All-Knowing.

that this will ease a lot of the burden and *Fitnah* that can make polygyny a hard path to tread. As long as you view your co-wife as an enemy, as long as you view her as some type of intrusive nuisance in your seemingly marital bliss, you are bound to have issues. And as long as incoming sister-wives act like intrusive nuisances, which I know many do, you are bound to have issues. Like I said, everyone has to be on the same page. And not only that, but we as women have to realize our strengths and our ability to overcome the innate jealousy that we have been endowed with. We already know that we get jealous and that *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*, Who created and fashioned us, recognizes this and thus has allowed us to use this as an expiation for choosing to exit the polygynous lifestyle. However, we also know that this jealousy is connected to our *Nafs*⁸⁰ and that we are able, if we really want to and seek sincere assistance from *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*, to work through this jealousy and overcome it. We all get jealous and this is okay. But it's acting upon that jealousy that is the issue and is problematic. And if we do act upon our jealousy, we must also learn how to be humble enough to correct ourselves and seek *Maghfirah*⁸¹ from *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*.



Tuesday, October 17, 2006

The Purpose of Marriage

Subhaan'Allaah, I saw something today that reminded me of the first time that I met my husband. After that first meeting I wrote a piece about the purpose of marriage in *Islaam*. I wrote the piece intending to give it to my husband if *Allaah* willed for us to get married. *Alhamdulillah* we did get married and I did give it to him to read. Now, I feel compelled to share it with you all. Enjoy...

I have sat and pondered over the meaning of marriage, particularly within the context of Islaam. What exactly is the purpose of this union commanded upon the believers by Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa? How were men and women created from the same entity and yet they are so distinctly different in their inner and outermost forms? What is it within the human form that makes us yearn for partnership, for companionship? Are we simply trying to return back to that initial state of human creation? Was Hawwa (Eve) not at one point one with Aadam? Was she not fashioned from his rib by the infinite Wisdom and Power of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa? Are we not, man and woman, in essence made to be together for we

⁸⁰ Carnal desires.

⁸¹ Forgiveness.

are and have always been of one another? What is the purpose of marriage? What is the purpose of marriage?

“The best love is the kind that awakens the soul and makes us reach for more.” Such a simple and yet profound statement, enclosed in the notebook, the movie “The Notebook.” I have sat and pondered over the meaning of marriage. I have sat and pondered and tried in so many words to write down what little insight I have within me from my limited knowledge of what marriage means, and more specifically, what it means to me. And then...this quote. This statement, filled with so much meaning, so perfectly and concisely sums up what I have been trying to convey, but could not find the words. “The best love is the kind that awakens the soul...” Maybe, the writer of the screenplay of this movie did not have the thought of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta’aalaa and Eeman in mind when he or she wrote this line, however, the message that I took from it is one of Eeman, Ihsaan, and Allaah. And I know that so often, especially nowadays, marriage is often romanticized and packaged within wrappings of superficial renditions of “love” and “romance.” In fact, I would even say that marriage is “minimized” to these superficial renditions. For isn’t marriage about so much more? And isn’t love, “true” love, about so much more? A believer, a true believer in Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta’aalaa knows that the best love is that which is for Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta’aalaa, and connected to this is loving someone for the sake of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta’aalaa. This is the best love. This is the love that every marriage should be grounded in, for it is this love that “awakens the soul.” “The best love is the kind that awakens the soul...” What is the purpose of marriage? Is it not to love someone for the sake of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta’aalaa and, in the process awaken the soul? Should not a husband and wife be inspirations for one another in submitting to Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta’aalaa? Should not a husband and wife be constant reminders to one another of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta’aalaa? Should not the love shared between a husband and wife be a vehicle by which the two obtain the highest levels of Eeman and Ihsaan, worshipping and submitting to their Lord in a way that is best, inspiring one another to perform acts of worship that will Insha’Allaah gain them a place in Jannah? Is this not what “awakening the soul” means? Is this not the purpose of marriage?

“...and makes us reach for more.” The “best” love, love that is for the sake of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta’aalaa, should “make us reach for more.” In uniting as husband and wife, should not a man and woman inspire one another to constantly strive to learn more about

this Deen? Should not a husband and wife inspire one another to learn what it is that will gain the pleasure of our Lord and then, together, take part in those actions? Should not a husband and wife help one another to gain the pleasure of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa? And in the process, should they not then gain the pleasure of one another? Are not a husband and wife partners in the race of this Dunyaa and is not the end goal Jannah? Is not the end goal Jannah? Is not the end goal Jannah? Do not partners in a race support one another in obtaining the end goal? What is the purpose of marriage?

We so often here people who "fall in love" and get married proclaim that in their partner they have "found their other half" or have been "made whole." And myself, like many other people, roll our eyes at such a cliché term that, in the world of Kufi⁸² and romanticized notions of marriage and love, really lacks substance and truth. However, if one were to put these notions of finding one's other half and being made whole through marriage into the context of Islaam, a once flimsy and meaningless statement, gains meaning and truth. To once again allude to the beginning of the creation of humanity, was not Hawwa created from the rib of Aadam? Were not man and woman created of the same entity? Are we not, through marriage, trying to return to that initial state of human creation, to reconnect to that place of wholeness? Make no mistake, I am not trying to claim that men and women are the same. To the contrary, we are very different. Alhamdulillah. But in our difference, we complement each other. Where one of us lacks, the other is abundant. From the beginning of time we were created to be partners. And we were created with a purpose, that purpose being to worship Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa. Reflect. Were not man and woman created as partners? And did not Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa create us to worship Him? Therefore, what is the purpose of marriage? It is a partnership between a man and woman whose purpose is to incite one another to the worshipping of Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa...The best love is the kind that awakens the soul and makes us reach for more...I am looking for someone to awaken my soul and make me reach for more.

*July 27, 2005
2:45 am*

⁸² Disbelief.



Wednesday, October 25, 2006

My Struggle

I wasn't always gung-ho about polygyny. My acceptance of it as an integral part of *Islaam* and something that is ordained by *Allaah* was a process as was my acceptance of many other components of the *Deen*. Although I was never completely against it, nor did I ever have a blatant hatred for it, I initially explained it away as some old-time practice that was no longer applicable to "modern" times. My dismissal of it as a viable form of marriage in the here-and-now shifted to an acceptance of it as something that "others" do, but not something that would fit into my life. I was bombarded by negative stories from sisters who knew a sister who knew a sister who had an aunt who was a third wife and was terribly miserable. Not once did anyone speak of a polygynous marriage that was working. Positive polygynous marriages were relegated to the status of mere fairy-tales.

Then I went away to college and everything changed. I met a family who proved that old-time adage that "fairy-tales do come true." I watched two sisters interact as best friends and, if it weren't that one of them was African-American and the other was Arab, they could have passed for blood sisters. In fact, many in the community were not aware that they were wives of the same husband. They simply thought that they were just really close friends. This closeness, this bond, this love is exemplified in the *Naseehah* that one of them gave me when I was seeking advice just prior to my hubby marrying my sister-wife. In an email, the sister wrote:

As-salaamu 'Alaykum sis,

Allaah knows why He does what He does! Of all the people to meet, you get introduced and embraced with a family handling the dual marriage situation. I am happy to hear that you are dealing with this in such a positive way. May Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa bless you and lighten your heart in its struggles...

Okay now, of course as the first wife you automatically have the fear of how drastic will your change be as this new person comes in and changes life as you have known it. Ask Allaah to allow you to redirect this fear to where it should be which is to view that this life is not about acting as those women of the Dunya holding and grabbing possessively to their mate. As a Muslimah your mindset should be that this man is sent and given to me from Allaah and I have a duty to him to care and comfort him in order to gain Allaah's pleasure. Know that the jealousy and anger that erupts is only

Shaytaan pulling you to forget what you really should be focused on. Everyone is different but my advice to you is to get to know the other one and create an environment that allows you to all be family, not associates. You love your family, stick your neck out for your family. You really have no attachment to your associates. There will be many battles ahead of you as each of you adjust to this situation. It would be far easier for you to regain or return to your calmness after feeling great stress or anger if you really had an emotional attachment to the other wife. Otherwise, you can just get mad at some bump in the road and constantly point the finger at the co-wife building your resentment for her. I'm not saying you have to live together, but I would suggest you spend time together.

Another thing that will only allow this situation to be successful is an open communication with your husband. I am not saying for you to give him grief about something he really can't change (example: it's her night and you tell him, "I don't want you to go") but other issues where you need to reaffirm where you stand with him are okay. Ask him how he feels about things you question and be humble when you ask, not filled with contempt.

Just know, being in this situation is a blessing from Allaah because of how it can help you grow spiritually. You are on a journey to leave behind many Dunyaa ideals you have picked up in your youth and adopt the Islaamic way of dealing with things. Busy yourself with talents and study so you are not idle with the Shaytaan when your husband is not with you. And pray often for Allaah to forgive you. My experience brought me a sister who I love very much and we look out for each other. Insha'Allaah I pray you have an even better situation.

After witnessing a polygynous marriage that was not only working but was embraced by all members involved, I began to seek out more "fairy-tales-come-true." I found writings by *Muslimaat* who were in polygyny and were happy. I befriended *Muslimaat* who I later came to find out had a co-wife or co-wives and who allowed me into some of their most intimate spaces to see the beauty of polygyny-done-right. I read up on the lives of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*. And all of a sudden, my feelings towards polygyny began to shift. It was a gradual shift. Until, one day, in a discussion I was having with a sister about a *Shaykh* who had two wives, I found myself wondering what it would be like to be in that situation. Wondering turned into wanting. And then I met my husband and the thought of sharing this blessing of a Muslim man that Allaah *Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* had placed in my life just made sense. It just seemed right.

I share all of this with you because, I suppose from all my previous writings it may seem that from the beginning I was endowed with some "polygyny acceptance" chip on my shoulder. This is not the case. I've been down many roads with this part of the *Sunnah*. I've even been down the "NEVER ME" road. *Allaah* had different plans for me. And not only did He have different plans for me, but He prepared me for those plans long before marriage was a part of my reality.



Thursday, November 02, 2006

A Poem From the Past

the spiritual quest-part one

*my pen is not new to written expression/
 used to lyrically put love to question/
 trying to decipher bouts of misguided affection/
 love wasn't even a suggestion/
 not even an afterthought, I was just blind/
 confined by the limited possibilities I had set aside/
 for myself/
 devalued my valuables, set my worth to substandard/
 contaminated my mental capacity drastically/
 spiritually malnourished, feigning for a morsel of truth/
 submitted my physical to boys not yet men/
 while inside my inner child cried for a reprieve/
 and I fed her more temporary lust disguised as love/
 fed her deathly blows of unstable fulfillment/
 while she ate from the plate of familiarity/
 disappointment no longer a possibility but a surety/
 my situation was critical and I was critically involved in my own self-
 destruction/
 spent nights in tears, cradling my tampered body/
 trying to replace deprivation with life/
 I was a fatherless, brown child searching for life's purpose/
 content, I seemed, on the surface/
 fooling passerby with my smile and unique style of playing the displeased
 pleasurer/
 feeding people's souls with plate-filled delicacies of things wished for but not
 meant for/
 me/
 all I gave was all I never had but always dreamed of/
 gave away parts of my undefined self/
 and received back bits and pieces of others' visions of me/*

*my identity/
 they scripted me into being/
 so intricately weaved my story/
 while I simply complied, not asking why/
 just where and when/
 I was broken with no belief in the hope of being made whole again/
 self-love not an option/
 their love inauthentic, not genuine/
 I was soul-searching, scoping out a human source/
 my spirit gravitating toward a Higher force/
 my physical pulling me back to an unstable course/
 the struggle was real/
 the outcome unknown/
 the journey a mental and spiritual odyssey toward/
 His purpose for me...*



Tuesday, November 28, 2006

Ventilation with Filtration: The Art of Venting without Exposing the Sins/Faults of Others

As writers, we clean up the "mess" of our life through our fingertips and dump the waste on all who stumble upon our writing. In our quest to gain clarity, in our quest to get things off our chests, we expose the world to more than just our own mess...we expose the world to the mess of those who we feel have contributed to our wasteland. In our process of ventilation, we expose the faults of the one's we love for the whole world to read. Most of the time this is not our intention. We just want to talk about ourselves, we just are trying to figure out what is going on with ourselves. But we fail to realize that in figuring out ourselves, we undoubtedly are going to have to touch on the actions and statements of others, especially if we feel that the limbo we are in is a direct result of somebody else's faults.

Mastering the art of simultaneous ventilation and filtration is a difficult task, yet not impossible. As *Muslims* we are supposed to hide the faults of our fellow brothers and sisters, as long as the faults do not involve that person openly attacking *Islaam* or falsely attributing things to *Islaam* intentionally. In regards to the committing of sins, whether major or minor, we are supposed to hide these sins, not broadcast them. There is a *Hadeeth* in which *Rasulullaah*, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, states that the believer who hides the sins of his fellow brother or sister will have their sins covered by *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* on the Day of Judgment. *Subhaan'Allaah*, how many of us miss out on this opportunity to have our sins covered up by *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* on the Day when these sins can be the

weight that places us in the Fire? Instead of approaching the person who is sinning or who is at fault in private, correcting them one-on-one, not "on the mimbar" so-to-speak, we let the world know: My life is a mess and it's because of this action and that action and this action of so-and-so. We must be cautious in our quest to vent. Even in those instances where it is permissible to reveal the faults of our fellow brother or sister, for instance, in a case where we are trying to get advice on a particular problem we are experiencing, we are allowed to expose the faults of our fellow brother or sister with the intention not just to vent, but to correct the situation. And we are allowed to seek this *Naseehah* in which we must reveal the faults of another in order to explain the situation ONLY to those who have knowledge and authority and who can then give counsel to us or to that person. Even still in this situation, the 'Ulamaa have stated that it is best not to specify who the person you are seeking *Naseehah* about is by name or by their relation to you, but to instead phrase your question in general terms, i.e. "There is a brother/sister who did this."

As I transfer my polygynous experience onto paper, I constantly must remind myself that while I am more than happy to share my life with the world, if it means exposing the faults or sins of my fellow brother or sister in *Islaam*, whether it be my husband, my co-wife, or other than them, then I must put my pen to rest. Especially if the only purpose of my exposition is to vent.

The Messenger of Allaah Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam said: "My entire nation is safe, except Al-Mujaahirin (those who boast of their sins). Among the Mujaharah is that a man commits an (evil) act, and wakes up in the morning while Allaah has kept his (sin) a secret, he says: "O Fulan! Last night I did this and that." He goes to sleep while Allaah has kept his (sin) a secret but he wakes up in the morning and uncovers what Allaah has kept a secret!" [Saheeh Al-Bukhaaree]

Zayd ibn Aslam narrated, "At the time of the Messenger of Allaah Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam, a man admitted that he had committed fornication, so the Messenger of Allaah asked for a whip. He was brought a broken whip, so he said: 'Better than this.' Then he was brought a new whip..., he then said: 'Lesser than this.' So, he was brought a whip that was used and had thus become soft, and the Messenger Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam ordered that he be whipped with it (a hundred times). He then said: 'O People! It is time for you to refrain from transgressing Allaah's limits. He who commits some of these filthy acts (such as fornication), let him hide under Allaah's cover, for whoever admits what he has committed, we will establish Allaah's Book as regards him (by applying the warranted punishment for this sin)." [Musnad Ahmad]

'Abdullaah Ibn Mas'ud Radee Allaahu Anhu related, "A man came to the Prophet and said: 'O Messenger of Allaah! I have mingled with a woman in the far side of Al-Madinah, and I fulfilled my desire short of actually having sexual intercourse with her. So, here am I, judge me according to what you decide.' 'Umar Ibn al-Khattab Radee Allaahu Anhu then said: 'Allaah had kept your secret, why did not you keep your secret?'" [Sharh Muslim]

Similarly, if one becomes aware of somebody else's sin, he should keep it a secret. Allaah's Messenger Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam said: "He who relieves a hardship of this Dunyaa (world) for a Believer, Allaah will relieve (from him) a hardship of the Day of Resurrection; he who makes ease for an indebted person, Allaah will make it easy for him in the Dunyaa and the hereafter; he who covers a Muslim (meaning his mistakes and shortcomings), Allaah will cover him in the Dunyaa and the hereafter..." [Muslim]



Thursday, November 30, 2006

*Importance of Having a Wali*⁸³

In discussions about sisters' varying marital problems, rarely do we hear about the sister having a *Wali* or her going to her *Wali* for intervention. *Subhaan'Allaah*, it is a sad but true fact about the state of *Muslimaat* nowadays, particularly reverts, that they either get married without a *Wali* (which by the way, *Rasulullaah*, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, said in numerous *Ahadeeth* that a marriage is not valid without a *Wali*⁸⁴) or the sisters start out with a *Wali*, like the local *Imaam* or something like this, but then once they're married they don't keep contact with the *Wali*, nor does the *Wali* keep contact with them and basically they are just left out there with nobody to mediate for them and safeguard their rights. A lot of problems that occur in marriages, whether dealing with polygyny or not, could be avoided or at least dealt with in a better manner if sisters had reliable *Awliyaa'* who they trusted and felt they could confide in. So many issues stem from inadequate pre-marital question-asking and investigation, something that *Insha'Allaah*, it is the job of the *Wali* to facilitate, to make sure that the brother who intends to marry the sister for whom he is a *Wali* is good in character and is about what he says he is about. *Masha'Allaah*, for those sisters who are experiencing difficulties in their marriage where their

⁸³ A *Muslim* male who acts as a sister's guardian during her marriage process.

⁸⁴ Recorded in Ahmad, Abu Dawuud, Ibn Maajah, An-Nisaa'ee, and At-Tirmidhi; declared *Saheeh* by Shaykh Al-Albaanee in *Saheeh Al-Jaami'*, Vol. 2, No. 7555.

husbands are not giving them their rights, yeah, I understand we all need to vent and I'm not knocking that, but in terms of really trying to change your condition, there's only so much another sister can do for you. And especially as sisters, we can't approach your husband and "put him in check" the way that a male guardian or *Wali* can. That's why if a sister really wants help, if she really wants something to change, she needs to (1) get herself a reliable *Wali* if she doesn't have one and (2) seek counsel about her specific situation from those who are in a position to actually check her husband and advise him. I'm telling you, many times, when a man knows that his wife or potential wife has a *Wali* to back her corner who will truly protect her and who's about the business, he will be less inclined to abuse her and neglect her rights.

Of course this is all in addition to a sister standing up for her own rights and being firm on what she will and won't accept, within the bounds of *Qur'aan* and *Sunnah*. And *Allaah* knows best.



Wednesday, December 06, 2006

It Starts with the Children

To try to stop the practice of polygyny would be like trying to stop the spread of *Islaam*. Both have been ordained by *Allaah* and prophesied by the Prophet Muhammad, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*. We know that there will come a time when the practice of polygyny will not just be about a brother's desire for it, but will be about his obligation to do it as it will become a necessity. In fact, it will get to a point that women will outnumber men 50 to 1⁸⁵ so that even if every man took the maximum limit of four wives, there will still be women left over without a husband. Whether we like it or not, polygyny is a part of our present and pre-destined future, whether directly or indirectly. Somebody in our family lineage, whether it be our children, their children, or someone further down the line will be personally affected by polygyny. So, while we can't stop the tide of polygynous marriages, we can attempt to correct its mispractice. How? By starting with our offspring. Raising righteous daughters who are aware that marriage in *Islaam* is both monogamous and polygynous, teaching them the *Hikmah*⁸⁶ and benefits behind both, making them aware of their rights and responsibilities as wives, mothers, *Muslims*. But even moreso, we must raise righteous sons who are also aware that marriage in *Islaam* is both monogamous and polygynous, teaching them the *Hikmah* and benefits of both, making them aware of their rights and responsibilities as husbands,

⁸⁵ *Saheeh Al-Bukhaari*, Book of Knowledge, *Hadeeth* No. 81.

⁸⁶ Wisdom. Literally: putting something in its proper place.

fathers, *Muslims*. We must make sure that as young boys our sons are aware of the full depth in meaning of the statement of *Allaah* in the *Qur'aan* "reverence the wombs that bore you."⁸⁷ We must raise sons who know about the character of the Prophet Muhammad, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, and aspire to exemplify that character in its totality. We must raise sons who recognize the huge *Amaanah* (trust) that *Allaah Subhanahu wa Ta'aalaa* has given them when it comes to the women in their lives and the women of the greater *Ummah*. We must raise sons who have a deep respect, love and protective nature for the women in their life so that when they become young men and they get married and perhaps they choose to practice polygyny, they will do so with the correct intention and with the knowledge and aspiration to be just and fair. We must do this if we have any hope, any desire to kill the cancerous tumor that is eating up so many of our households, marriages and communities. Of course this responsibility does not only lie with the women, but with the men as well. And so I am addressing both.

For those sisters who are married currently, regardless of whether the marriage is monogamous or polygynous, as well as those sisters who are not yet married, I want you all to be blessed with righteous husbands who fear *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* in all that they do, who give you your rights, who fulfill their responsibilities. I make *Du'aa* for all of you to have this. I make *Du'aa* for my sisters who are in marriages where their husbands are neglecting their rights that *Allaah* guides their husbands to that which is correct, rectifies their affairs and forgives them for their shortcomings. May *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* guide all the *Muslims* in their affairs. Whatever I have said that is correct and true is from *Allaah*. The mistakes are only my own and I ask *Allaah* to forgive my sins and misgivings. *Ameen*.



Friday, December 15, 2006

Punishing Honesty, Preferring Deception

Okay, I know that what I'm about to write is bound to incite riots, so hold on a minute....let me...just...put...on....this armor....over my....*Khimaar*⁸⁸...because seriously, y'all can be rough sometimes.

So, the following is inspired by a couple of things. First, a brother from Indonesia informed me of a very sad paradox that recently was exemplified in the media where around the same time that an *Imaam* was shunned and caused an uproar for his polygynous endeavors, a member of parliament was

⁸⁷ *Surat An-Nisaa' (4):1.*

⁸⁸ Long, loose *Muslim* woman's headdress that covers her entire head, neck and chest, sometimes falling as low as her knees.

exposed committing *Zinaa* in a video and received public sympathy. I believe one of the comments from the public was "too bad he allowed her to video-tape him," as if the problem is not that he committed *Zinaa*, but that he got caught. *Wa Na 'uudhubillaahi Min Ash-Shaytaanir-Rajeem*. As a result of reading about this incident, I was reminded of the fact that this situation in Indonesia is actually a common paradox that exists within *Muslim* sisters...the fact that many *Muslimaat* have such a distaste for polygyny that their husband committing *Zinaa* in secret is more acceptable and palatable to them than their husband having an open polygynous marriage. This paradox exists on the premise that their husband's extra-marital affair is (1) secret (i.e. the wife doesn't know about it) and (2) a one-time fling, no attachments emotionally, time-wise, or monetarily. I would like to dissect this paradox if I may.

Okay, firstly, just if y'all don't know, *Zinaa* is *HARAAM* and the *Shar'ee* punishment for a married man who commits adultery is stoning to death. On the other hand, polygyny is *HALAAL* and, even if the man is not being just and fair in its practice, the graveness of his unfairness is incomparable to the severity of his committing adultery. Indeed, adultery in *Islaam* is from amongst the MAJOR SINS and the classical *Mufasssireen*⁸⁹ of this *Ummah*, in explaining how grave it is in the sight of *Allaah* have pointed out that in the *Qur'aan Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*, when mentioning *Zinaa*, mentions it alongside *Shirk*⁹⁰ (the one thing *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* will not forgive).

"And come not near unto adultery. Lo! It is an abomination and an evil way (Al-Israa' (17):32)."

"And the servants of the Beneficent are those who do not invoke another god with Allaah, and who do not... commit fornication/adultery, for whoever does that shall receive the penalty; for him shall the torment be doubled on the Day of Resurrection, and therein he shall abide forever, disgraced, save him who repents and believes and does good works; those, Allaah shall change their misdeeds into good works. And Allaah is Forgiving, Compassionate (Al-Furqaan (25):68-70)."

In addition, it is one of the only THREE things that, if a *Muslim* commits them, makes it permissible for the *Islaamic* state to shed his blood.

The Prophet Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam said: "[Under Islaamic laws in an Islaamic state] It is not lawful to shed the blood of a

⁸⁹ Scholars of *Ahadeeth* (narrations of the sayings and actions of the Prophet Muhammad).

⁹⁰ Associating partners with *Allaah*.

Muslim except for one of three sins: a married person committing fornication, and in just retribution for premeditated murder, and [for sin of treason involving] a person renouncing Islaam, and thus leaving the community [to join the enemy camp in order to wage war against the faithful].”

(Al-Bukhaari, Muslim, Abu Dawuud, At-Tirmidhi, and An-Nisaa’ee)

The Prophet Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam said: “There are three types of sinners that Allaah will not speak to on the Day of Resurrection; neither will He purify them nor will He even look at them; rather they will suffer severe punishment: an older person who commits adultery, a king or ruler who lies to his subjects, and a poor person who acts arrogantly!”

(Muslim and An-Nisaa’ee)

There are plenty of other *Ahadeeth* that speak of the graveness of adultery but I think that what I have mentioned thus far is suffice.

Okay, now that I got that foundational information out of the way, let me point out a few other things. Firstly: If you recall, I mentioned that *Muslimaat* that would rather their husband to commit *Zinaa* than to take on another wife, find this acceptable (1) if it is hidden from them, and (2) with the understanding that extra-marital affairs are one-time occurrences without any emotional, time, or monetary attachments. Well, I have a question: If acceptance of your husband having an extra-marital affair is under the pretext that you are unaware of it, why would it matter if he does it one time, two times, or ten times, or even if he had some type of attachment? After all, you wouldn't know about it, right? Also, there is no proof that extra-marital affairs are one-time occurrences. Quite the contrary, haven't y'all heard the old-time saying of the *Kufaar*: "Once a cheat, always a cheat." Studies have shown that actually a man who is inclined to have an extra-marital affair most likely will do it again and probably has done it prior to the instance that you find out, if you find out. Also, while a man may or may not get attached to the woman that he has an extra-marital affair with, it is likely that the woman will get attached. This oftentimes is what leads to major *Fitnah* and to the exposure of the extra-marital affair to the wife, for the mistress gets fed up with being "the other woman" and demands a more permanent, non-secretive relationship to the refusal of the man and so the mistress takes matters into her own hands and goes to any means to break her lover's marriage apart, including telling the wife. Studies have even been done where "other women" were asked if they had a choice between remaining a mistress or becoming a second-wife what would they choose and the majority chose polygyny.

Subhaan'Allaah, I just recently finished reading this book⁹¹ about the history of polygyny and monogamy in Christianity and the author was stating that back in the day, the whole imposition of monogamy as the only legitimate form of marriage led to this trend amongst the rulers and clerics of Christianity where you would find the men constantly divorcing and re-marrying because they would be married to one woman and then they would at some point become fond of another woman (which by the way did not cause them to not want to be with their current wife) and because polygamy was illegal and detestable in the sight of the Church they would divorce their current wife in order to be with the other woman OR have an extra-marital affair hence remaining married OR get married illegally to the other woman. If given the option they would choose to stay with their current wife AND marry another, for their love and want for the latter did not negate or decrease their love and want for the former. Rarely did they abandon their extra-marital relationship. Hence this shows the absurdity of outlawing polygyny as a means of deterring polygynous relationships. It didn't work back in the day and quite frankly it isn't working now. For while men who consider themselves "Christian" may not be able to legally get married to more than one woman, this does not stop them from wanting to be with more than one woman and acting upon that want, even if it be "immorally" and "illegally."

This brings me to another point. You know, men who just express interest in polygyny, let alone actually practice it, are often labeled as "selfish" or "following their selfish desires" by women who are opposed to polygyny. However, is it not selfish for a woman to not want her husband to have another wife? Is it not selfish for a woman to not mind if her husband has an extra-marital affair, but deny the other woman rights to her husband's body, money, and time? Couldn't that be considered following one's selfish desire to have their husband all to themselves? We're not talking about whether her feelings of not wanting to share her husband are legitimate or not. That's not the point so don't get sidetracked.

Let's look up "selfish" in the dictionary:

*Selfish (Self"ish)*⁹²

1. *Caring supremely or unduly for one's self; regarding one's own comfort, advantage, etc., in disregard, or at the expense, of those of others.*
2. *(Ethics) Believing or teaching that the chief motives of human*

⁹¹ "The History and Philosophy of Marriage or Polygamy and Monogamy Compared," James Campbell: 1869.

⁹² <http://www.selfknowledge.com/86351.htm>

action are derived from gratifying one's own pleasure.

Hmmmmmm...Ponder on that for a minute.

How about this...Couldn't it be said that a woman who would rather her husband commit *Zinaa* then marry another woman, knowing the severity in punishment in this life and the next for the one who commits adultery, couldn't it be said that this woman is being selfish? It is claimed that when a man remarries he is disregarding the feelings of his wife, her emotional wellbeing. Well, what about his "spiritual wellbeing"? What about the station of his soul on the *Yaummul Qiyyaama*⁹³? By accepting one's husband committing *Zinaa* over his practicing polygyny, a woman is putting her emotional wellbeing in this life over her husband's spiritual wellbeing in the next life. For even if she doesn't know about "the other woman/women," *Allaah*, the All-Knower and All-Seer does.

Hmmmmmm...Again ponder.

Lastly (I think): Women who marry an already married man or desire this are also often labeled as "selfish" and "following their selfish desires" by those who are against polygyny, especially those whose husbands have remarried. Well, I know two women who are "second" wives and *Masha'Allaah* one of them has children who absolutely adore her husband and, if it weren't for him, her daughters would not have a father-figure and the sister would have not been brought back upon the correct path of *Al-Islaam*. I know that it is not always the case that men marry widows or women with children. And I know that people act like if men were doing this then polygyny would be more palatable to them. Well, quite frankly, according to *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*, polygyny's acceptance is not based on "who" the man is marrying or even "why" he is remarrying. He can marry whomever he wants (well, accept for non-*Ahlul Kitaab*⁹⁴ *Mushrikaat*⁹⁵ and unchaste women, but y'all know what I mean) for whatever reason, including just because he has a desire to do so, and as long as he has the means, *Khalaas*⁹⁶. This may leave a bad taste on sisters' mouths (or I guess because you are reading, it might leave a nasty crud in your eyes), but it is what it is. Hiding behind the "men aren't doing it for the right reasons" slogan is really played out at this point. Just admit you have a problem accepting your husband remarrying UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, FOR ANY REASON, TO ANYBODY, WHETHER WIDOW OR STREET HOE.

⁹³ Day of Judgment.

⁹⁴ "*Ahlul-Kitaab*" means "People of the Book," i.e. Jews and Christians, who are a category of the *Kufaar* (disbelievers).

⁹⁵ Polytheists.

⁹⁶ Signifies commencement, finality.

Lastly (I know I said this already): The fact of the matter is that just as there are not "perfect" monogamous husbands or marriages, there are not "perfect" polygynous husbands or marriages. People seem to have a double standard when it comes to monogamy vs. polygyny. Even how I just phrased that shows some type of standoff or battle between the two. The fact is, a man has responsibilities and duties towards his wife regardless of if the marriage is monogamous or polygynous. He has to be just and fair in monogamy AND in polygyny. *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* sent down guidelines for the relations between a husband and wife, whether in monogamy or polygyny. Even in monogamy, the husband has to be able to financially provide for his wife. The only difference in polygyny is that the man has marital responsibilities towards more than one woman. The responsibilities are still the same, they are just doubled, tripled, or quadrupled. This also means that all the problems, trials, struggles that one encounters in a monogamous marriage, in polygyny are doubled, tripled, or quadrupled.

One argument that is made against polygyny in *Islaam* is that men of our times can never live up to the "ideal" of *Islaamic* polygyny, however, when you examine the "ideal" people are talking about, really, even *Rasulullaah*, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, doesn't live up to it. I am not saying that *Rasulullaah* doesn't exemplify an "ideal" *Islaamic* polygynous husband. What I am saying is that the "ideal" that people claim cannot be lived up to doesn't coincide with the "ideal" of *Rasulullaah's* example. So basically, we have two different "ideals." The "ideal" that people claim is the only circumstance in which polygyny will become "acceptable" to them is one where the man has enough money to support all his wives LAVISHLY, where he spends equal time with all of them, where he does everything right so that they are never displeased with him and never get jealous of one another, where the co-wives get along and never spite one another, etc., etc. Well, we can see that even in the example of *Rasulullaah*, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, throughout his Prophethood he was poor. There is even a *Hadeeth* in which 'Aa'ishah, *Radee Allaahu Anha*, states that there was a period of time where the only thing they had to eat in their house were the "two black things." The *Mufasssireen* have commented that "the two black things" are dates and water. We know that at one point some of the wives due to the lack of material comfort they had, began to pressure the Prophet, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, to "hook them up" so-to-speak. So much so that *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa* sent down the following *Aayaat*:

"O Prophet (Muhammad Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam)! Say to your wives: If you desire the life of this world, and its glitter, then come! I will make a provision for you and set you free in a handsome manner (divorce).

But if you desire Allaah and His Messenger, and the home of the

Hereafter, then verily, Allaah has prepared for Al-Muhsinaat (good-doers) amongst you an enormous reward (Al-Ahzaab (33):28-29)."

The *Tafseer*⁹⁷ of these *Aayaat* reveal that the wives of *Rasulullaah*, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, chose *Allaah* and His Messenger. *Alhamdulillaah Wallaahu Akbar!!!*

We also know that the wives of *Rasulullaah*, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, got jealous of one another at times and that sometimes they acted on this jealousy. So, this utopian, "ideal" polygynous marriage that sisters claim brothers in the present-day can't live up to and thus this legitimizes in their minds a reason why polygyny shouldn't be practiced in the present-day, this "ideal" is beyond even the example of the Prophet and his wives. The fact is, the Prophet and his wives had trials in practicing polygyny, let alone in each of their individual marriages, and they were the best of examples. So no doubt, we in the present-day will have trials. People will get jealous. People will feel like they are getting short-changed and demand more. People will make mistakes. None of us will ever be "perfect" wives, "perfect" husbands, or "perfect" *Muslims*. We are by nature imperfect and prone to make mistakes. This, however, does not mean that we should abandon striving to be as close to the "ideals" set by *Allaah Subhaanahu wa Ta'aalaa*. In fact, this is the purpose of our very existence.

Okay, I'm stepping off the *Mimbar* now and taking off my armor...



Sunday, December 17, 2006

Change of Heart, Shift in Focus

"The believers, men and women, are Auliyyaa' (helpers, supporters, friends, protectors) of one another, they enjoin (on the people) Al-Ma'ruuf (i.e. Islaamic Monotheism and all that Islaam orders one to do), and forbid (people) from Al-Munkar (i.e. polytheism and disbelief of all kinds, and all that Islaam has forbidden); they perform As-Salaat (Iqaamat-as-Salaat) and give the Zakaat, and obey Allaah and His Messenger. Allaah will have His Mercy on them. Surely Allaah is All-Mighty, All-Wise (At-Tawbah 9:71)."

Bismillaahir Rahmaanir Raheem. Innalhamdulillaah was-salaatu was-salaamu 'Alaa Rasulillaah Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam wa 'Alaa Aalihi wa Sahbihi wa Min At-Tabi'een. Wa Na'uudhubillaahi Min Ash-Shaytaanir-Rajeem.

⁹⁷ See "Appendix": *Tafseer (Ibn Katheer)* of *Surat Al-Ahzaab (33):28-29*.

Assalaamu 'Alaykum wa Rahmatullaahi wa Barakaatuh,

To all my readers, past, present, future, those who love me, those who hate me, and those who tow the line of uncertainty. This is to you all. No ambiguity. I'm coming to you straight.

I am at a different place now then where I was at when I first began writing about my experiences with polygyny. *Subhaan'Allaah*, I was looking over all my writings from June until now and I can see the change. I can see when it happened and I can see some of the occurrences that prompted it to happen. I won't call it "progress," because I've already been labeled "self-righteous." So, let's just call it "change."

When I started writing, I was hurting and struggling. Mind you, I accepted polygyny BOTH as an ordainment of *Allaah* and as a part of my life. As I have mentioned, my struggle was more about my personal insecurities as well as suppressed animosity and resentment I had towards my husband. With time and lots of self-reflection I was able to work through my trials. This was all done by the Will of *Allaah*, with the guidance and support of my sisters in *Islaam*, as well as that of my beloved husband.

The first three months of my writing were all very personal and at times quite emotional. They were about me, my struggle, circumstances in my life dealing with my intimate dealings with polygyny. I needed to vent and I strove to do so in a way that was not compromising to the tenets of my *Deen*. I know that I have said that I started writing to show people the beauty of polygyny, but really, this is not true. It is true of my intention NOW, but initially I started writing because I wanted people to see the process of one sister trying to cope AND overcome her struggle with polygyny. I didn't know IF or even WHEN I would overcome my battle. I didn't know if or when things would become comfortable for me, when my heart would be settled with my situation. I didn't know the "if" or the "when" but I knew that I wanted to get through things. I wanted to overcome whatever feelings I was going through. Yes, I could have rejected my husband's polygynous endeavors. Yes, when he told me that he was planning on getting re-married, I could have told him that I wanted out. Yes, I could have remained married and remained unhappy, just operating but not really living. But this is not what I wanted. This is not what I desired. I wanted to make polygyny work in my life. I wanted to get past the supposed cons and see the potential pros, not as just some abstract concepts, but as my lived experience. I wanted to be at peace with my polygynous situation and so that is what I strove for. And that is what I got. *Alhamdulillah wallaahu Akbaar!!!*

I will not apologize for not being in pain anymore. Nobody has directly

asked me to do this, but indirectly this is somehow what I feel people want me to do. Either that, or admit that I'm not REALLY happy, because if I didn't get the memo, there is no way that a woman can be in polygyny AND be happy. Or better yet, there is no way that a woman can be in polygyny because she really WANTS to be and not just because she's suffering in silence, hence waiting for her reward in Paradise. I AM IN POLYGyny BECAUSE I WANT TO BE...

...and I want other sisters to be able to find the peace that I have found. By stating this I am not stating that I am superior to those sisters that haven't found peace or even that there is a problem with a sister struggling. That would be hypocritical as I too was once there. However I am not there now, so if people want to read about pain and struggle then they can focus on Part One of this book. Or they can seek out someone else's story whose reality fits those circumstances.

This is my truth.

"Verily with hardship there is relief."
(Ash-Sharh 94:5)

Appendix

Regarding the *Hadeeth* of Fatimah⁹⁸

In explanation of the *Hadeeth* narrated by Al-Miswar bin Makhrama:

"I heard *Allaah's* Messenger who was on the pulpit, saying, 'Banu Hisham bin Al-Mughira have requested me to allow them to marry their daughter to 'Ali bin Abu Taalib, but I don't give permission, and will not give permission unless 'Ali bin Abee Taalib divorces my daughter in order to marry their daughter, because Fatimah is a part of my body, and I hate what she hates to see, and what hurts her, hurts me.'" [*Saheeh Al-Bukhaari*, Vol. 7, Book 62 (Book of Marriage), *Hadeeth* No. 4887]

Narrated from 'Ali ibn al-Husayn:

"'Ali demanded the hand of the daughter of Abu Jahl. Fatimah heard of this and went to *Allaah's* Messenger saying, 'Your people think that you do not become angry for the sake of your daughters as 'Ali now is going to marry the daughter of Abu Jahl.'

On that, the Messenger got up and after his recitation of *Tashahhud* (witnessing the oneness of the Creator and the prophethood of His Final Messenger) I heard him saying, 'I married one of my daughters (Zaynab) to Abu Al-'Aas ibn Ar-Rabi' before *Islaam* and he proved truthful in whatever he said to me. No doubt Fatimah is part of me; I hate to see her troubled. By *Allaah*, the daughter of *Allaah's* Messenger and the daughter of *Allaah's* enemy cannot be the wives of one man.'" [*Saheeh Al-Bukhaari*, Vol. 4, Book 53 (Book of One-Fifth of War Booty), *Hadeeth* No. 2900]

These *Ahadeeth* talk about the incident of 'Ali wanting to marry the daughter of Abu Jahl, the bitterest enemy of *Allaah* and His Messenger. From the statement of *Allaah's* Messenger, *Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*, in the second *hadeeth*, "By *Allaah*, the daughter of *Allaah's* Messenger and the daughter of *Allaah's* enemy cannot be wives of one man," it becomes clear that the Prophet's disapproval of 'Ali remarrying in this particular instance was because of the particular status of the woman to whom 'Ali sought to marry, for she was the daughter of one of the staunchest enemies of *Islaam*.

In addition, the Prophet's statement, "...Fatimah is a part of my body, and I hate what she hates to see, and what hurts her hurts me," as well as his statement, "I hate to see her (Fatimah) troubled," was meant as an

⁹⁸ See: Ibn Hajar, *Faath Al-Baari*, Volume 7, Page 106.

affirmation and confirmation of *Rasulullaah's* love and caring for his daughter, in direct response to people's conjecture that he did not care for her due to his not "becoming angry" about 'Ali seeking to marry the daughter of Abu Jahl.

Tafseer (Ibn Katheer) of Surat Al-Ahzaab (33):28-29

Giving the Wives of the Prophet, Sallallaahu ‘Alayhi wa Sallam, the Choice

Here *Allaah* commands His Messenger to give his wives the choice of separating from him so that they may go to someone else with whom they can find what they want of the life of this world and its attractions, or of patiently bearing the straitened circumstances with the Prophet for which they will have a great reward with *Allaah*. They chose *Allaah* and His Messenger and the Home of the Hereafter, may *Allaah* be pleased with them. Then *Allaah* gave them the best both of this world and of the Hereafter. *Al-Bukhaari* narrated from ‘Aa’ishah, may *Allaah* be pleased with her, the wife of the Prophet that the Messenger of *Allaah* came to her when *Allaah* commanded him to give his wives the choice. She said, "The Messenger of *Allaah* started with me, and said,

‘I am going to tell you about something and you do not have to hasten to respond until you consult your parents.’

He knew that my parents would never tell me to leave him. Then he said:

‘*Allaah* says: O Prophet! Say to your wives...’ and he recited the two *Aayaat*. I said to him, ‘Concerning what do I need to consult my parents? I choose *Allaah* and His Messenger and the Home of the Hereafter.’” He also narrated it without a chain of narrators, and added, "She said, ‘Then all the wives of the Prophet did the same as I.’”

Imaam Ahmad recorded that ‘Aa’ishah, may *Allaah* be pleased with her, said: "The Messenger of *Allaah* gave us the choice, and we chose him, so giving us that choice was not regarded as divorce." It was recorded by (*Al-Bukhaari* and *Muslim*) from the *Hadeeth* of Al-A`mash.

Imaam Ahmad recorded that Jaabir, may *Allaah* be pleased with him, said: "Abu Bakr, may *Allaah* be pleased with him, came to ask permission to see the Messenger of *Allaah* and the people were sitting at his door, and the Prophet was sitting, but he did not give him permission. Then ‘Umar, may *Allaah* be pleased with him, came and asked permission to see him, but he did not give him permission. Then he gave Abu Bakr and ‘Umar, may *Allaah* be pleased with them both, permission, and they entered. The Prophet was sitting with his wives around him, and he was silent. ‘Umar, may *Allaah* be pleased with him, said, ‘I will tell the Prophet something to make him smile.’ ‘Umar, may *Allaah* be pleased with him, said, ‘O Messenger of *Allaah*, if only you had seen the daughter of Zayd -- the wife of ‘Umar -- asking me to spend on her just now; I broke her neck!’ The Messenger of *Allaah* smiled so broadly that his molars could be seen, and he said,

‘They are around me asking me to spend on them.’

Abu Bakr, may *Allaah* be pleased with him, got up to deal with ‘Aa’ishah (daughter of Abu Bakr) and ‘Umar, may *Allaah* be pleased with him, got up to deal with Hafsa (daughter of ‘Umar), and both of them were saying, ‘You are asking the Prophet for that which he does not have!’ But the Messenger of *Allaah* stopped them, and they (his wives) said, ‘By *Allaah*, after this we will not ask the Messenger of *Allaah* for anything that he does not have.’ Then *Allaah* revealed the *Aayah* telling him to give them the choice, and he started with ‘Aa’ishah, may *Allaah* be pleased with her. He said,

‘I am going to tell you something, and I would like you not to hasten to respond until you consult your parents.’

She said, ‘What is it?’ He recited to her: ‘O Prophet! Say to your wives...’ ‘Aa’ishah, may *Allaah* be pleased with her, said, ‘Do I need to consult my parents concerning you...I choose *Allaah* and His Messenger, but I ask you not to tell of my choice to your other wives.’ He said:

‘*Allaah* did not send me to be harsh, but He sent me to teach in a gentle and easy manner. If any of them asks me what your decision was, I will tell her.’”

This was also recorded by *Muslim*, but not *Al-Bukhaari*; *An-Nisaa’ee* also recorded it. ‘Ikrimah said: "At that time he was married to nine women, five of them were from Quraysh -- ‘Aa’ishah, Hafsa, Umm Habibah, Sawdah and Umm Salamah, may *Allaah* be pleased with them. And he was also married to Safiyyah bint Huyay An-Nadariyyah, Maymunah bint Al-Harith Al-Hilaliyyah, Zaynab bint Jahsh Al-Asadiyyah and Juwayriyyah bint Al-Harith Al-Mustalaqiyyah, may *Allaah* be pleased with all of them.”

Don't Shoot the Messenger – Tafseer (Ibn Katheer) of Surat Aal-'Imraan (3):14

“Beautified for men is the love of things they covet; women, children, much of gold and silver (wealth), branded beautiful horses, cattle and well-tilled land. This is the pleasure of the present world's life; but Allaah has the excellent return (Paradise with flowing rivers, etc.) with Him.”

The True Value of This Earthly Life

Allaah mentions the delights that He put in this life for people, such as women and children, and He started with women, because the test with them is more tempting. For instance, the *Saheehayn* recorded that the Messenger said,

“I did not leave behind me a *Fitnah* more tempting to men than women.”⁹⁹

When one enjoys women for the purpose of having children and preserving his chastity, then he is encouraged to do so. There are many *Ahadeeth* that encourage getting married, such as,

“Verily, the best members of this *Ummah* are those who have the most wives.”¹⁰⁰

He also said,

“This life is a delight, and the best of its delight is a righteous wife.”¹⁰¹

The Prophet said in another *Hadeeth*,

“I was made to like women and perfume, and the comfort of my eye is the prayer.”¹⁰²

`Aa'ishah, may Allaah be pleased with her, said, "Nothing was more beloved to the Messenger of Allaah than women, except horses," and in another narration, "...than horses except women."¹⁰³

⁹⁹ *Faath Al-Baari* 9:41

¹⁰⁰ *Faath Al-Baari* 9:15. That is, a maximum of four at the same time.

¹⁰¹ *Muslim* 2:1090

¹⁰² *An-Nisaa 'ee* in *Al-Kubraa* 5:280

¹⁰³ *An-Nisaa 'ee* 6:217, 7:61

Expressions of Jealousy and Persistent Requests for Equality

Narrated 'Urwa from 'Aa'ishah:

The wives of *Allaah's* Messenger were in two groups. One group consisted of 'Aa'ishah, Hafsaah, Safiyyah and Sawdah; and the other group consisted of Umm Salamah and the other wives of *Allaah's* Messenger.

The *Muslims* knew that *Allaah's* Messenger loved 'Aa'ishah, so if any of them had a gift and wished to give it to *Allaah's* Messenger, he would delay it, until *Allaah's* Messenger had come to 'Aa'isha's home and then he would send his gift to *Allaah's* Messenger in her home.

The group of Umm Salamah discussed the matter together and decided that Umm Salamah should request *Allaah's* Messenger to tell the people to send their gifts to him in whatever wife's house he was. Umm Salamah told *Allaah's* Messenger of what they had said, but he did not reply. Then they (those wives) asked Umm Salamah about it. She said, "He did not say anything to me." They asked her to talk to him again. She talked to him again when she met him on her day, but he gave no reply. When they asked her, she replied that he had given no reply. They said to her, "Talk to him until he gives you a reply." When it was her turn, she talked to him again. He then said to her,

"Do not hurt me regarding 'Aa'ishah, as the Divine Inspirations do not come to me on any of the beds except that of 'Aa'ishah."

On that Umm Salamah said, "I repent to *Allaah* for hurting you."

Then the group of Umm Salamah called Fatimah, the daughter of *Allaah's* Messenger and sent her to *Allaah's* Messenger to say to him,

"Your wives request to treat them and the daughter of Abu Bakr on equal terms."

Then Fatimah conveyed the message to him. The Prophet said, "O my daughter! Don't you love whom I love?" She replied in the affirmative and returned and told them of the situation. They requested her to go to him again but she refused.

They then sent Zaynab bint Jahsh who went to him and used harsh words saying, "Your wives request you to treat them and the daughter of Ibn Abu Quhaafah on equal terms." On that she raised her voice and abused 'Aa'ishah to her face so much so that *Allaah's* Messenger looked at 'Aa'ishah to see whether she would retort. 'Aa'ishah started replying to Zaynab until she

silenced her. The Prophet then looked at 'Aa'ishah and said, "She is really the daughter of Abu Bakr."

~Saheeh Al-Bukhaari, Book of Gifts, Hadeeth No. 2417

Some Insight from the Narration of the Slander of 'Aa'ishah

Narrated 'Aa'ishah:

When there was said about me what was said which I myself was unaware of, *Allaah's* Messenger got up and addressed the people. He recited *Tashahhud*, and after glorifying and praising *Allaah* as He deserved, he said:

"To proceed: O people, give me your opinion regarding those people who made a forged story against my wife. By *Allaah*, I do not know anything bad about her. By *Allaah*, they accused her of being with a man about whom I have never known anything bad, and he never entered my house unless I was present there, and whenever I went on a journey, he went with me."

Sad bin Mu'adh got up and said, "O *Allaah's* Messenger, allow me to chop their heads off." Then a man from the Al-Khazraj (Sa'd bin 'Ubadah) to whom the mother of (the poet) Hassan bin Thaabit was a relative, got up and said (to Sad bin Mu'adh), "You have told a lie! By *Allaah*, if those persons were from the Aus Tribe, you would not like to chop their heads off." It was probable that some evil would take place between the Aus and the Khazraj in the *Masjid*, and I was unaware of all that.

In the evening of that day, I went out for some of my needs (i.e. to relieve myself), and Umm Mistah was accompanying me. On our return, Umm Mistah stumbled and said, "Let Mistah be ruined." I said to her, "O mother, why do you abuse your son." On that Umm Mistah became silent for awhile, and stumbling again, she said, "Let Mistah be ruined." I said to her, "Why do you abuse your son?" She stumbled for the third time and said, "Let Mistah be ruined," whereupon I rebuked her for that. She said, "By *Allaah*, I do not abuse him except because of you." I asked her, "Concerning what of my affairs?" So she disclosed the whole story to me. I said, "Has this really happened?" She replied, "Yes, by *Allaah*."

I returned to my house, astonished (and distressed) that I did not know for what purpose I had gone out. Then I became sick (with fever) and said to *Allaah's* Messenger, "Send me to my father's house." So he sent a slave with me, and when I entered the house, I found Umm Rumaan (my mother) downstairs while (my father) Abu Bakr was reciting something upstairs. My mother asked, "What has brought you, O (my) daughter?" I informed her and mentioned to her the whole story, but she did not feel it as I did. She said:

"O my daughter! Take it easy, for there is never a charming lady loved by her husband who has other wives but that they feel jealous of her and speak badly of her."

But she did not feel the news as I did. I asked (her), "Does my father know about it?" She said, "Yes." I asked, "Does *Allaah's* Messenger know about it too?" She said, "Yes, *Allaah's* Messenger does too." So the tears filled my eyes and I wept. Abu Bakr, who was reading upstairs heard my voice and came down and asked my mother, "What is the matter with her?" She said, "She has heard what has been said about her (as regards the story of *Al-lfk*)."
On that Abu Bakr wept and said, "I beseech you by *Allaah*, O my daughter, to go back to your home."

I went back to my home and *Allaah's* Messenger had come to my house and asked my maid-servant about me (my character). The maid-servant said, "By *Allaah*, I do not know of any defect in her character except that she sleeps and lets the sheep enter (her house) and eat her dough." On that, some of the Prophet's companions spoke harshly to her and said, "Tell the truth to *Allaah's* Messenger." Finally they told her of the affair (of the slander). She said, "*Subhaan'Allaah!* By *Allaah*, I know nothing against her except what a goldsmith knows about a piece of pure gold." Then this news reached the man who was accused, and he said, "*Subhaan'Allaah!* By *Allaah*, I have never uncovered the private parts of any woman." Later that man was martyred in *Allaah's* Cause.

The next morning my parents came to pay me a visit and they stayed with me until *Allaah's* Messenger came to me after he had offered the '*Asr* prayer. He came to me while my parents were sitting around me on my right and my left. He praised and glorified *Allaah* and said, "Now then O 'Aa'ishah! If you have committed a bad deed or you have wronged (yourself), then repent to *Allaah* as *Allaah* accepts the repentance from his slaves."

An *Ansaari* woman had come and was sitting near the gate. I said (to the Prophet), "Isn't it improper that you speak in such a way in the presence of this lady?" *Allaah's* Messenger then gave a piece of advice and I turned to my father and requested him to answer him (on my behalf). My father said, "What should I say?" Then I turned to my mother and asked her to answer him. She said, "What should I say?"

When my parents did not give a reply to the Prophet, I said, "I testify that none has the right to be worshipped except *Allaah*, and that Muhammad is His Messenger!" And after praising and glorifying *Allaah* as He deserves, I said, "Now then, by *Allaah*, if I were to tell you that I have not done (this evil action) and *Allaah* is a witness that I am telling the truth, that would not be of any use to me on your part because you (people) have spoken about it and your hearts have absorbed it; and if I were to tell you that I have done this sin and *Allaah* knows that I have not done it, then you will say, 'She has confessed herself guilty.' By *Allaah*, I do not see a suitable example for me

and you but the example of (I tried to remember Ya'quub's name but couldn't) Yusuf's father when he said, 'So (for me) patience is most fitting against that which you assert. It is *Allaah* (alone) whose help can be sought.'"

At that very hour the Divine Inspiration came to *Allaah's* Messenger and we remained silent. Then the Inspiration was over and I noticed the signs of happiness on his face while he was removing (the sweat) from his forehead and saying, "Have the good tidings O 'Aa'ishah! *Allaah* has revealed your innocence." At that time I was extremely angry. My parents said to me, "Get up and go to him." I said, "By *Allaah*, I will not do it and will not thank him nor thank either of you, but I will thank *Allaah* Who has revealed my innocence. You have heard this story but neither did not deny it nor change it (to defend me)."

'Aa'ishah further said: "*Allaah's* Messenger also asked Zaynab bint Jahsh (i.e. his wife) about my case. He said to Zaynab, 'What do you know and what did you see?' She replied, 'O *Allaah's* Messenger! I refrain from claiming falsely that I have heard or seen anything. By *Allaah*, I know nothing except good (about 'Aa'ishah).'

From amongst the wives of the Prophet, Zaynab was my peer (in beauty and in the love she received from the Prophet) but *Allaah* saved her from that evil because of her piety."

~Saheeh Al-Bukhaari, *Kitaab At-Tafseer*, Hadeeth No. 4429

Regarding A Woman Stipulating That Her Husband Not Take Another Wife

What a Woman May Stipulate in a Marriage Contract

Written By: Imaam Ibn Qudamah al-Maqdisi

Translated By: Yahya Adel Ibrahim from *Al-Mughni* of Ibn Qudamah, Vol. 9, Page 483: Issue #1141

He said: "If a man marries her and (accepted) her stipulations that he shall not remove her from her home or city (country), then her stipulation is to be honoured/ fulfilled (from that moment on) due to what has been reported from *Rasulullaah* (*Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*). He said: "The most deserving of conditions to be honoured/fulfilled are those which the genitalia are deemed *Halaal* by them (marriage is built upon their acceptance).

As well if he marries her and (accepts) her stipulation that he will not marry another woman while with her then she is granted the power to abandon him if he marries another."

The summary of (this issue) is that stipulations relating to *Nikaah* (pre-nuptial agreements) are of three main categories.

(Translators note: Only the first issue is translated):

First: (A condition) that which must be fulfilled. It is a condition wherein its benefit and worth are returned. Examples are stipulations wherein he (vows) not to remove her from her residence or land, or that he will not travel with her (to foreign lands), or that he will not take another wife while with her. All of these are conditions that he would be bound to fulfilling (if he agreed to them before cohabitation). If he does not honour the stipulations she is granted the ability (and right) to annul the marriage (at her will). This is reported as being the opinion of:

‘Umar bin al-Khattab, Sa’d bin Abee Waqas, Mu‘awiyah, ‘Amr bin al- ‘Aas (*Radee Allaahu ‘Anhum*). It was also stated by:

Shurayh, ‘Umar bin ‘Abdul-Aziz, Jabir bin Zayd, Tawus, Al-Awza‘i and Ishaq.

Those who deemed these conditions unacceptable were:

Az-Zuhari, Qatadah, Hisham bin ‘Urwa, Maalik¹⁰⁴, Al-Layth, Ath-Thawri,

¹⁰⁴ The *Madh'hab* of Maalik validates a stipulation upon a man in which it is stipulated that he is not to marry another woman while in marriage with the first (wife) or else she will be given the order (power) in her hand (to annul the marriage). She would be given the power to separate from him at her choice. This

Ash-Shafi'ee (in part), Ibn al-Mundhir, and the people of logical deduction and inference.

Abu Hanifah and Ash-Shafi'ee stated: "If he breaks one of the aforementioned conditions she is not entitled to leaving him. The original dowry (*Mahr*) is deemed invalid and she deserves another equal *Mahr* to what she has already been given (by her husband)."

They use as their proof the statement of *Rasulullaah* (*Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*):

"Any condition, which is not in *Allaah's* Book, is worthless (invalid). Even if there are a hundred conditions. *Allaah's* decision is more valid and *Allaah's* condition is more binding." (Agreed upon)

(They say) such a condition is (not sanctioned) in *Allaah's* Book since the Law does not espouse it.

He (*Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*) also said, "*Muslims* are bound to their conditions/stipulations. (But) a condition that makes *Halaal* a *Haraam* or a *Haraam Halaal* is (not from binding conditions)." (Bukhaari, Tirmidhi and others)

This (type of condition) is turning a *Halaal* into a *Haraam*. Taking more than wife and traveling (are *Halaal*). As well, these conditions do not benefit or improve the '*Aqd* (marital pre-nuptial contract) and are not integral to it. In fact it would be similar to stipulating that she is not to present her self (ever) to him (in copulation)." - End of words of Shafi'ee and Abu Haneefah.

For us (our understanding) we have the following (evidence):

"The most deserving of conditions to be honoured/fulfilled are those which the genitalia are deemed *Halaal* by them (marriage is built upon their acceptance)." (Agreed Upon)

As well his statement (*Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*): "*Muslims* are bound to their conditions/stipulations." (Previously referenced)

As well we have named many *Sahaabah* who validated these stipulations, and none from their generation/peers refuted them. Therefore we establish this as being *Ijmaa'* (consensual agreement by them all).

It is narrated by Al-Athram with his chain of narration that a man married a woman and (agreed to the stipulation) that she may reside in her (own) home. Thereafter he sought to transfer her elsewhere. They turned to 'Umar (*Radee Allaahu 'Anhu*) in disputation.

He (*Radee Allaahu 'Anhu*) said, "Her condition is to be fulfilled."

The man replied, "If that is the case then she is to grant the divorce (he means that she is to relinquish her condition or divorce him)."

'Umar (*Radee Allaahu 'Anhu*) replied, "The absolute rights are (established with their) stipulations (i.e. his right is over-ruled by his agreement to her stipulation)."¹⁰⁵

This (as well as the other mentioned stipulations are) valid because there is only benefit found in it (i.e. it does not call to deviance) and it is not intended to depreciate or tarnish what is established by *Nikaah*. Therefore fulfilling the condition is obligatory. (These types of stipulations) are the same as if she stipulated that he increase her *Mahr* (from his initial offer) or not take her abroad.

As for the Prophet's (*Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam*) statement: "Any condition, which is not in *Allaah's* Book, is worthless (invalid)."

This is regarding a condition that is not founded upon *Allaah's Hukm* and *Sharee'ah*. These (conditions) are substantiated in *Sharee'ah*. We have shown precedence for it. Those who seek to oppose this (valid opinion) must bring forth (explicit) evidence that renders the aforementioned evidence nullified.

As for their (Shafi'ee and Abu Haneefah) statement: that these stipulations make a *Halaal Haraam*, then we say that they do not make the *Halaal* into *Haraam*.

It merely ensures the right of a woman to decide for herself if she wishes to remain in that situation or not considering that he has not fulfilled his pre-marital agreement.¹⁰⁶

As for their statement: That there is no benefit or improvement in these stipulations.

¹⁰⁵ Reported by Ibn Abee Shaybah in his *Musaanaf* (Vol. 4, Page 199). As well it is found in the *Sunan* of Sa'eed bin Mansour (Vol. 1, Page 185)

¹⁰⁶ It is important to note that the second wife is legal for the man to wed. The issue is whether the first wife wants to remain in that situation or not. Many people mistakenly think that this stipulation makes it illegal for the husband to take the second or third wife. That is not the case at all. It is merely to ensure that the first wife is able to leave the marital relationship if she cannot deal with the new situation.

We say that we object to this understanding. These (stipulations) are very beneficial for the woman. The benefit of the stipulator is beneficial as well for the one being stipulated to (since the man knows what is acceptable and what is not).

Fasl (Side point):

If she was to stipulate that he was to divorce his other wife then that condition would be deemed invalid and unacceptable.

Abu Hurayrah (*Radee Allaahu 'Anhu*) reports: "*An-Nabee (Sallallaahu 'Alayhi wa Sallam)* forbade a woman from making it a condition for her husband to divorce her sister (his other wife)." (Reported by Al-Bukhaaree)